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COMIC BIBLE SKETCH.—No. 101.



THE WITCH OF ENDOR.

"And Saul disguised himself, and put on other raiment and . . . came to the woman by night: and he said, I pray thee, divine unto me by the familiar spirit, and bring me him up."—1 SAMUEL xxviii., 8.

CHRISTMAS IN HOLLOWAY GAOL.

The dullest Christmas I ever spent was in her Majesty's hotel in North London. The place was spacious, but not commodious; it was magnificent in the mass, but very petty in detail; it was designed with extreme care for the safety of its many guests, but with a complete disregard of their comfort; and it soon palled upon the taste, despite the unremitting attentions of a host of liveried servants. How I longed for a change of scene, if what I constantly gazed upon may be so described; but I was like a knight in some enchanted castle, surrounded with attendants, yet not at liberty to walk out. The hospitality of my residence, however, was by no means sumptuous. The table did not groan beneath a weight of viands, or gleam with glowing wines. Its poverty was such that a red-herring would have been a glorious treat, and a dose of physic an agreeable variety. Why then, you may ask, did I not quit this inhospitable hotel, and put up at another establishment? Because I was invited by her Majesty, and her Majesty's invitations are commands.

Speaking by the card, Christmas-day in Holloway was treated as a Sunday. There was no work and no play then, the dinner was the poorest and worst cooked in the whole week, and the only diversion was a morning or afternoon visit to chapel, where we had the satisfaction of learning that heaven was an eternal Sunday. Angels and ministers of grace defend us! That was the most unkindest cut of all.

The fibre put into my cell to be picked by my industrious fingers had all been removed the previous evening,

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lest I should desecrate the sacred day by pursuing my ordinary avocation. My apartment was therefore clean and tidy, and by the aid of a bit of dubbin I managed to give an air of newness to my well-worn shoes. The attendants had, however, omitted to provide me with a Sunday suit, so I was obliged to don my working clothes, in which graceless costume I had to perform my religious devotions in the house of God, where an ill-dressed person is always regarded as an exceptionally bad sinner, and expected to show an extraordinary amount of humility and contrition. Linen was never a burning question in Holloway Hotel, and cuffs and collars were unknown, except when a short guest wore a long shirt. My toilet was therefore easily completed; and with a good wash, and the energetic use of a three-inch comb, I was soon ready for the festivities of the season.

At eight o'clock I received the first instalment of my Christmas fare, in the shape of three-quarters of a pint of tea and eight ounces of dry bread. Whether the price of groceries was affected by the Christmas demand, or whether the kitchen was demoralised by the holiday, I am unable to decide; but I noticed that the decoction was more innocuous than usual, although I had thought its customary strength could not be weakened without a miracle. My breakfast being devised on the plainest vegetarian principles, there was no occasion for grace before meat, so I sipped the tea and munched the bread (eight ounces straight off requires a great deal of mastication) without breathing a word of thanks to the giver of all good things.

After a remarkably short hour's tramp round the exercise ring in a thieves' procession, doing the rogue's march without the music, I returned to my cell, and sitting down on my little three-legged stool, I was soon lost in thought. I wondered what my wife was doing, how she was spending the auspicious day. What a "merry Christmas" for a woman with her husband eating his heart out in gaol! But "that way madness lies," and I had fought down the demon too long to give way then. Springing to my feet, I sped up and down my cell like a caged panther, and after many maledictions on "the accursed creed," I succeeded in stilling the tumult of my emotions. A great calm followed this storm, and resuming my seat and leaning my back against the plank-bed, I took a scornful retrospect of my prosecution and trial. How insignificant looked the Tylers, Giffards, Norths and Harcourts! How noble the friends and the party who had stood by me in the dark hour of defeat! A few short weeks, and I should be free again to join their ranks and strike hard in the thickest of the battle, under the grand old flag of Freethought.

The chapel-bell roused me from phantasy. The other half of the prison disgorged its inmates, and I could hear the sound of their tramping to the sanctuary. While they were engaged there I did an hour's grinding at Italian and read a chapter of Gibbon; after which I heard the "miserable sinners" return from the chapel to their cells.

At twelve o'clock came my second instalment of Christmas fare: six ounces of potatoes, eight ounces of bread and a mutton chop. Being on hospital diet, I had this trinity for my dinner every day for nine months, and words cannot describe the nauseous monotony of the menu. The other prisoners had the regular Sunday's diet; bread, potatoes and suet-pudding. After dinner I went for another short hour's tramp in the yard. The officers seemed to relax their usual rigor, and many of the prisoners exchanged greetings. "How did yer like the figgy duff?" "Did the beef stick in yer stomach?" Such were the flowers of conversation that afternoon. From the talk around me, I gathered that under the old management, before the Government took over the prison, all the inmates had a

"blow out" on Christmas day, consisting of beef, vegetables, plum-pudding and a pint of beer. Some of the "old hands" bitterly bewailed the decadence in prison hospitality. Their lamentations were worthy of a Conservative orator at a rural meeting. The present was a poor thing compared with the past, and they sighed for "the tender grace of a day that is dead."

After exercise I went to chapel. The schoolmaster, who was a very pleasant gentleman, had drilled the singing class into a fair state of efficiency, and they sang one or two Christmas hymns in pretty good style; but the effect of their efforts was considerably marred by the rest of the congregation, whose unmusical voices, bad sense of time, and ignorance of the tune, more than once nearly brought the performance to an untimely end. Parson Playford followed with a seasonable sermon, which would have been more heartily relished on a fuller stomach. He told us what a blessed time Christmas was, and how people did well to be joyous on the anniversary of their Savior's birth; after which I presume he returned to the bosom of his family, and celebrated the birth of Christ with liberal doses of turkey, goose, beef, pudding and communion wine. Before dismissing us with his blessing to our "little rooms," which was his habitual euphemism for our cells, he said that he could not wish us a happy Christmas in our unhappy condition, but would wish us a peaceful Christmas; and he ventured to promise us that boon if, after leaving chapel, we fell on our knees, and besought pardon for our sins. Most of the prisoners received this advice with a grin, for their cell-floors were blackleaded, and practising genuflexions in their "little rooms" gave too much knee-cap to their trousers.

At six o'clock I had my third instalment of Christmas fare, consisting of another eight ounces of bread and three-quarters of a pint of tea. The last mouthfuls were consumed to the accompaniment of church bells. The neighboring gospel-shops were announcing their evening performance, and the sound penetrated into my cell through the open ventilator. The true believers were wending their way to God's house, and the heretic, who had dared to deride their creed and denounce their hypocrisy, was regaling himself on dry bread and warm water in one of their prison-cells. And the bells rang out against each other from the many steeples with a wild glee as I paced up and down my narrow dungeon. They seemed mad with the intoxication of victory; they mocked me with their bacchanalian frolic of triumph. But I smiled grimly, for their clamor was no more than the ancient fool's-shout, "Great is Diana of the Ephesians." Great Christ has had his day since, but he in turn is dead; dead in man's intellect, dead in man's heart, dead in man's life; a mere phantom, flitting about the aisles of churches where priestly mummers go through the rites of a phantom creed.

I took my Bible and read the story of Christ's birth in Matthew and Luke. What an incongruous jumble of absurdities! A poor fairy tale of the world's childhood, utterly insignificant beside the stupendous wonders which science has revealed to its manhood. From the fanciful little story of the Magi following a star, to Shelley's "Worlds on worlds are rolling ever," what an advance! As I retired to sleep upon my plank-bed my mind was full of these reflections. And when the gas was turned out, and I was left alone in darkness and silence, I felt serene and almost happy. My Christmas day in Holloway Gaol was nearly over; but before I fell asleep I resolved (and have I not kept the resolution?) to defy the bigots immediately on my release, and to devote all my energies to the destruction of their horrible creed, which prates of "peace on earth, and good-will towards men," and damns and persecutes every man who presumes to question its truth.

G. W. FOOTE.

CHARITABLE appeals are all the rage at this season. A religious contemporary says it is overwhelmed with them, and adds "the host of piteous appeals for poor ministers and their families distress us most of all." But why cannot these "poor ministers" turn to some more useful occupation? Is it because they have no gumption for secular pursuits? If so, why don't they emigrate and preach the Gospel in distant lands where the clerical market is less glutted? "Go ye into all the world," said Jesus Christ. Why, then, do our needy sky-pilots stay at home, when they might carry the bread of life abroad and get good wheat bread in return, to say nothing of butter or a relish of bacon?

A ROW IN HEAVEN.

I KNEW a man (whether in the body or out of the body I cannot tell: Paul knoweth) who, being pretty deep in the spirit on the Lord's birthday, was caught up into Paradise, where he heard a deal of language which, as it is not lawful for a man to utter, I shall not report.

According to this spiritual-minded individual, the dismal monotony of heaven is occasionally varied. The tedium of sitting on damp clouds, singing the songs of Moses and the Ram, is sometimes relieved by the arrival of an extra batch of converted wife-murderers or defaulting bank-directors. Sometimes a variation occurs when some blessed saint finds his harp wants tuning, or that his crown of glory doesn't fit, or when his white robe, washed in the blood of the Lamb, impedes his wings. Of late, it seems, an uncomfortable feeling has pervaded the celestial regions. It has been whispered that a powerful enemy named Science is abroad, and that heaven will soon be rolled together as a scroll and its inhabitants pass into oblivion. The angels' wings are moulting. The beasts and elders before the great white throne are hoarse with singing "Holy, holy, holy." The cherubim, tired with flopping about with nothing to sit on, are roosting on their heads upside down; while the seraphim vainly try to skate on the slippery sea of glass. All seem out of sorts. Things were brought to a climax this Christmas. No birthday party was given, owing to the row when the other gods were invited to celebrate the natal day of Joshua ben Miriam, when Mithras, Osiris, Adonis, Horus, Apollo, Buddha, Balder and others claimed the honors of the day. The heavenly choir were, however, employed in practising an Advent hymn, but their leader—David, the sweet singer of Israel—being absent, were making a sad mess of it.

"Stop that row," shouted the old one, sitting with Joshua on his right hand and the pigeon on his shoulder; "it's as hideous as a Salvation meeting. Do you take this for a Whitechapel gospel shop? Always singing in praise of the youngster too, never a word for the father! Blessed if I haven't a mind to follow Vishnu's example and get up a new Avatar."

"Where's David?" said the son, sternly. "Here Joshua, my son," hiccupped David, who looked as if he had partaken too freely of the Sacrament. "Call me not son, but Lord," said Joshua, who seemed ashamed of his ancestor. "Why are you not leading the band? I think we must put Uriah the Hittite in your place, since you took his." "I've been helping the recording angel to jot down some of the lies of Talmage about the infidels. He has more than he can manage in writing down the crimes of the clergy." "Well, set about practising your Christmas carols, or I will send you to your proper place down below. You carry on as if you were still living under the old dispensation." "I guess I have as much right to be here as Jacob, Joshua, Samuel, St. Cyril, Cæsar Borgia, or your new favorite Guiteau," grumbled the sweet psalmist, as he went to lead the heavenly choir. "Stop that row," again shouted Jahveh as soon as the chorus began. "Coo-coo," said the dove. "Shut up, you confounded sky-pigeon or I'll soon make a tumbler of you," roared the ancient of days. "Never mind him, he's getting deaf with listening to so much praying and howling, and is falling into his dotage," said his beloved son. "Deaf, am I?" shouted the father; "I'll let you know that I, Jahveh, thy god, am a jealous god and a consuming fire. I won't put up any longer with you and your caterwauling interlopers. I'll send you all to the condemnation of Hades." Much more ensued, which, as Paul says, it is not lawful to utter. Soon all the angels began to take sides in the dispute, and ranged themselves, the Jewish saints on one side and the Christian on the other. A battle royal was about to commence, when our reporter awoke, and vowed that to avoid such disagreeable visions he would celebrate the birthday of the Sun next Christmas with less whisky and plum-pudding.

J. M. WHEELER.

ACCORDING to the *Christian World*, "the Bible ever authenticates itself afresh." A very fortunate faculty in a book which is discredited by every advance in science and morality. But it is a strange thing, after all, that God's word should need a fresh apology every ten years. It looks as though the Lord devised the mongrel collection of Jew-Greek tracts to give perennial employment to his black army of theologians.

G O D I N A M A N G E R.
(A Christmas Doggerel).

ONE long ago day, in a land far away—
The exact time and place is a myst'ry—
A god came on earth by miraculous birth,
Tho' the fact is not mentioned in hist'ry.
And from heaven on high—that realm in the sky—
He passed the celestial portals;
And to this planet came, to be born just the same
As the meanest of ordinary mortals.
Then this great god of all began life in a stall—
The stall of an unsavory stable—
(This is true gospel word, and to doubt is absurd,
Tho' it certainly reads like a fable).
Now you'll readily see e'en this child's pedigree—
Tho' it cannot distinctly be stated—
Would make him appear of celestial sphere,
And to Jahveh quite nearly related.
Indeed, we are told by the writings of old
That he was that God and no other;
For father he'd none, he was his own son,
And an unspotted virgin his mother!
Suffice it to say that an angel one day
With Mary the Virgin had tarried;
This somewhat did rouse the ire of her spouse
(For, strange tho' it seems, she was married);
But he'd wedded the maid, so believed all she said
Of this wonderful angel from heaven,
Nor opened his eyes with the slightest surprise
When the virgin an infant was given.
So this little god-child, by sin undefiled,
With neither godfather, godmother,
No father could boast but this same Holy Ghost,
Who was Jahveh himself or his brother.
Ghost, Father and Son, these three were all one,
So the maiden had worked no deception;
Yet that sons could be born to a maiden forlorn
Seems quite beyond human conception.
Be that as it may, on this first Christmas Day—
Tho' a midwife was not within calling—
To this small earthly ball, as the Savior of all,
Young Jesus came, kicking and squalling.
But this infant divine, 'midst the poultry and swine
And the cattle and filth of the manger,
Soon suckled content, as tho' he now meant
To appear quite at home nor a stranger.
He was round, red and plump, quite a beautiful lump
Of gristle and fat and albumen;
He had fingers and toes, two eyes and a nose,
And was just like a baby that's human.
When the babe he espied, old Joseph he cried:
"I think I shall like the child, rather,"
(Then the infant he took with an odd knowing look)
"Tho' I can't say it's much like its father."
The virgin she blushed as her baby she "hushed"—
For Jesus was cross and contrary—
And she hung down her head as her blushes still spread,
For a modest young maiden was Mary.
Just then a loud knock gave the door quite a shock,
And took away Joe's self-possession!
And the door opened wide, then came trooping inside
A strange and most motley procession.
There were some dressed like kings with their jewels and rings,
And attended by silken-clad pages;
Shepherds of flocks in their old sheep-skin smocks,
Magicians and wise men and sages.
Now, a wonderful star, shedding light near and far,
Had mysteriously brought them together;
They had travelled this way their homage to pay
In spite of the night and the weather.
Their intentions were kind, yet it seems to my mind
(Even tho' they with presents were laden)
That it scarcely was right, and far from polite,
To disturb so poor Mary the maiden.
But they came one by one up to Jesus her son,
And explained they had come to adore him;
To call him their kirk, nice presents to bring,
And perform genuflections before him.
Then they took from their backs their various packs,
And the contents made Joseph's eyes glisten;
And he looked on the while with a satisfied smile,
To their chatter, pretending to listen.
His income was mean and his visage was lean;
He had lately got thinner and thinner.
So he saw at a glance that here was a chance
To provide him a good Christmas dinner.
Whilst he stood thinking there the rest were at prayer
(Thought he, "they're a long time about it")
But young Jesus ne'er knew, for he slept the whole thro',
And perhaps was as happy without it.
But some hours had gone and still they prayed on
In voices all harsh and sonorous,
Till an ass's loud bray and a horse's shrill neigh
Added much to the strength of the chorus,

Then the yoke-oxen lowed and the chanticleer crowed
As tho' to resent this intrusion;
But louder than all came young Jesus's squall
To add to the din and confusion.
And as neither his sire nor his ma soothed his ire,
In the corner, disgusted, she packed him.
Yet he would not be quiet, but continued his riot,
So the virgin at last soundly smacked him.
Still the magi adored, tho' they felt somewhat bored
As his squealing grew louder and stronger;
Now distracted they were, and at last in despair
They determined to stand it no longer.
So those offerings rare they didn't leave there
Tho' old Joe' didn't fail to remind them;
But they tied up their packs and mounted their hacks
And left the brat squalling behind them.

H. GORDON SWIFT.

ACID DROPS.

WHAT with threats of prosecution, coughs, chillblains, carols, cant, prayers, puddings, pauperism, pills, bills, bronchitis and dynamite, one feels there is some credit in being jolly at this celebration of the birthday of our Lord and Savior—the sun.

WHAT a peculiar way of keeping up the day, when the "man of sorrows" wasn't born, Christians have! Holly, mistletoe, crackers, cakes, puddings, presents, games, dancing and feasting, are all good things in their place, but, like all the good things in Christianity, they are stolen bodily from Paganism.

DIVINES say this is the season for meditating on the holy mystery of the Incarnation. We have accordingly been meditating on some words of Cardinal Newman. That ornament of the Church of Rome declares that the Virgin Mary must have been immaculately pure and free from original sin since Christ was absolutely pure, and a clean thing cannot come from an unclean. We don't know what the Cardinal means by Christ being absolutely pure. The anonymous epistle to the Hebrews says: "Forasmuch then as the children are partakers of flesh and blood, he also himself likewise took part of the same" (ii., 14). But granting this absolute purity, if it needed his mother to be absolutely pure, so must all his progenitors have been, right away back to the original orang-outang. Judah, David, Bathsheba, Solomon, and all the shady ancestry of Jesus, must, according to the argument of Cardinal Newman, have been as pure as Jesus himself.

A WRITER in the *Church Times* suggests that as the Father was incarnate in the Son so the Holy Ghost was incarnate in the Virgin Mary. If so the Church of Rome must be right in worshipping the virgin mother of Jesus, James, Joseph, Simon and Judas.

PANTON HOOD finds a supreme virtue in Dr. Johnson—"In the era of Voltaire he worshipped regularly in St. Clement Danes." Yes, and he would have hanged the great Frenchman for daring to disbelieve his mother's creed. He once told Boswell that Rousseau was a bad man, and added: "I would sooner sign a sentence for his transportation than that of any felon who has ever gone from the Old Bailey these many years." "Sir," said Boswell, "do you think him as bad a man as Voltaire?" "Why, sir," replied the Doctor, "it is difficult to settle the proportion of iniquity between them." After these specimens of his pious bigotry, what value can be placed on his attachment to the orthodox creed of his native land? If Johnson had been born in Turkey, he would have devoutly worshipped in a Mohammedan mosque, and damned everybody who threw a doubt on the Koran.

DR. DALE'S "Manual of Congregational Principles" is exciting a good deal of discussion. In one clause he sets up a claim of infallibility for every big or little congregation of the saints. If, he says, "the members are completely one with Christ, their decision is his decision; what they bind on earth is bound in heaven, what they loose on earth is loosed in heaven." The Romish Church never asserted a lordlier power. The fact is that vanity and arrogance are inherent in Christianity. Every meeting of deacons or elders is as bumptious as a Popish Council, and every petty preacher or mission-hall spouter is as cock-sure and imperious as the Vicar of Roue. Give the minister of little Bethel a chance and he would play the Pope as though "to the manner born."

DR. HATCH maintains that "progress is as possible in theology as it is possible in other sciences." True, but theology progresses like a polar iceberg; it melts away as it goes along. In theology, progress means dissolution. A Liberal theologian is a man with very little theology, and the more Liberal he is the less of it he possesses.

CLARA DAWSON (of Leeds) commits suicide and writes "God will have mercy on my soul." Talmage will see that this proves the truth of his assertion that it is Atheism that causes suicide.

WALTER J. GOULD was brought to the Malden police-station recently, having been found praying on the top of the chimney of his father's house. He said that he was on his way to heaven. Dr. Shute pronounced him insane.

MR. R. MARION, J.P., died suddenly on the platform in the Wesleyan chapel, Oldbury, immediately after addressing a missionary meeting. If this had happened to an "infidel" lecturer it would have edified millions of Christians as a divine judgment.

THE only son of the Bishop of Rochester has been received into the Roman Catholic Church. Protestants readily perceive that the conversion of an alleged "infidel" to Christianity proves the incontestible truth of the religion he adopts. But somehow the conversion of a Protestant to Roman Catholicism proves nothing but the terribly insidious nature of the Romish system and the weakness of human nature.

THE Rev. William Huson of Oxford has also been received into the bosom of the Roman Catholic Church.

AT Rowley, the other day, Benjamin Morris, who has been a leader of the Salvation Army and also a local preacher at Blackheath, was sentenced to a month's imprisonment for drunkenness and vagrancy. It was stated that the prisoner had been turned out of his sister's house for disgraceful conduct, and at two o'clock in the morning he was found helplessly drunk.

THE Salvation Army riots continue to enliven the Sundays at Eastbourne. At Warrington the Corporation is trying to prevent the nuisance by a new bye-law inflicting a fine of five pounds on any person taking part in a procession calculated to interfere with the comfort of the inhabitants.

PHYLLIS ELEANOR BUTLER, domestic servant, went off to join her young man in the Salvation Army at Peterborough. As she took with her a £5 note, £3 10s. in gold, a silk dress, a shawl, and various other little items belonging to her mistress, the magistrate at Worship Street has sentenced her to six months' imprisonment. A year ago the prisoner was tried for a similar offence, having been decoyed by a captain of the Salvation Army.

THE Rev. E. T. Marriner, late curate at Rampton, where some extraordinary clerical proceedings recently occurred, was charged with assaulting his housekeeper by locking her up. The case, however, was settled, and all imputations were withdrawn.

AT Sheffield, John Broughton, aged 17, has been committed for burglary. He was caught in a jeweller's cellar with a dark lantern and a New Testament in his possession. Perhaps he will plead that he went there to enjoy an undisturbed perusal of the sacred word, and that he had taken his shoes off (like Moses) because the place was holy ground, or else out of consideration for his fellow-Christians whose slumbers he was unwilling to disturb. This promising proselyte had only just been released from imprisonment for burglary at Birmingham.

A CURIOUS instance of how far Rome is behind the age occurs in the latest Index Librorum Prohibitorum. The list does not contain the works of Charles Darwin, but the Zoomania of his grandfather, Erasmus Darwin, is prohibited.

THE *Rock* is not alone in its belief that spiritualism is the work of Demons, for the Catholic Dictionary, published this year with the approbation of Cardinal Manning, says: "Consultation of spirits cannot, it is plain, be made seriously without heresy, superstition and impicity combined. According to Gury, even passive assistance at a séance is sinful, because it is co-operation in a thing intrinsically evil."

IN regard to witchcraft, this Catholic Dictionary says: "Many recorded cases are apparently inexplicable, unless we suppose a demoniacal agency to have been at work. The fact of obsession, and the remedy of exorcism, remain unshaken."

MRS. CHARLES BRIGHT of Sydney, Australia, visited Goulburn a little while ago to lecture. This kindled the divine wrath of the local sky-pilot, who thus expresses his feelings in a handbill: "St. Nicholas' Church, Goulburn. The Rev. Canon D'Arcy Irvine's subjects to-morrow will be:—Morning, 'Remember Lot's wife' (Luke xvii., 32). Evening, 'I have this against thee that thou sufferest that Jezebel to teach and seduce my servants' (Rev. ii., 20). The Rev. Canon D'Arcy Irvine is evidently a worthy follower of Paul who 'suffered not a woman' to teach.

AN interesting little example of Christianity in practice occurred recently in a church near Wigan, in Lancashire. At a funeral of a poor man's child the mourners were seated in the church waiting for the solemn ceremony, when "the officiating parson abruptly and gruffly disturbed the solemn silence and the pious prayers of the assembled people by demanding, in a loud voice, to know who was going to pay his fees for the job!" The indignant father replied that of course he would pay all charges but the dispenser of religious consolation "without money and

without price" declined to proceed with the service till the father had accompanied him to the vestry and had paid the bill in full. The official sympathy and pretty sentiment of the subsequent ceremony did not, we are told, impress the hearers very profoundly.

SPEAKING of the recent suit between two reverend gentlemen for a church worth £15,000, and whose pew-rents alone amounted to £1,100 a year, the *Sporting Chronicle* says it readily understands the very fervent and praiseworthy interest taken in the sacred edifice, and could spare a good deal of devoutness itself over such a case.

LEEDS has followed the example of Birmingham in repressing religious gambling. The Watch Committee of the Corporation gave notice to the promoters of the bazaar in aid of St. Martin's Church that they would be prosecuted if raffling continued. The saints then reformed under compulsion, and their religious lotteries ceased to vie with the less sanctified lotteries of publicans and book-makers.

It is reported that there have been 396 cremations in Italy, and in Germany 186.

THE Rev. Murray Wilson, of Buxton, should acquaint himself a little with geology, and not exhibit himself as an ignoramus by citing the formation of rocks and caves as proofs of the Noachian deluge.

HELPING THE SAVIOR'S FAMILY OUT.

"WHAT yer doin' out in this country—prospectin'?" inquired Idaho Pete of a tall, saintly-looking book agent.

"Oh, no, sir; I am selling the 'Life of Christ.'"

"Life o' who?"

"Of Christ, my deah fellah."

"Yes, I've hearn the fellers up on the range speak o' him quite often when the cattle's givin' 'em considerable trouble. What country d' he drive in, anyhow?"

"Among the mountains and over the plains of the far East. The record of his noble deeds has been handed down from generation to generation."

"S that so? Who'd he wurk fur? D'ye know the name ov anybody he wurked fur?"

"He worked for everybody. He was truly a great man."

"Waal, I should shout. He must 'a been a rustler. Must 'a understood the business purty well after wurkin' fur everybody. How long ergo was he on the turf, pardner?"

"More than eighteen hundred years ago."

"Look here, stranger, yer ain't givin' me any stuff, be yer?"

"I know not your meaning, sir, but it is true that the man in question lived eighteen hundred years ago."

"Is this ther first book that's ever been writ about 'im?"

"No, sir, but this gives the most comprehensive review of his life, work and death."

"He died, did he?"

"Certainly, sir, a most terrible death."

"Did he go under with his boots on?"

"No, sir, naked."

"Waal, that's the durndest trick I ever hearn tell on. I've seen a great many cowboys sent over ther divide, but I never seen any on 'em have their toggery stripped off fast. Did he leave enny children?"

"He was never joined in the sacred bonds of wedlock, but he left children who have preserved and perpetuated his memory till the present day."

"That's a little tough, stranger. I'd 'a thought considerable more of him ef he'd waited till he'd got married before he'd so many kids. I suppose that's what got him inter trouble, wasn't it?"

"No, sir, there were those who were jealous of him; envious of the work he did and of his great power."

"Strong feller, hey?"

"He was mighty."

"Carson Sam, out on the Sweet Water range, is the strongest man now-a-days that I knows ov. How much cud this ar feller lift?"

"His strength had no limit, sir. He could raise mountains."

"Buokin' steers, but he was a dandy! That's a good deal more'n Sam can lift. I shud think he'd been a bad 'un ter run up against."

"He was a terror to his enemies."

"Yass; how cum um ter get erway with him?"

"He gave himself up; surrendered, sir."

"What'd ther critter do that fur?"

"To save his fellow-man. He died that you and I might live."

"Died fur me?"

"Yes, you."

"Crawlin' snakes! I didn't hear 'bout this afore. How'd he die? Did they shoot him?"

"No; hung him to a tree."

"Hung him!"

"Yes, and nailed his hands and feet to the tree and made wounds in his side, lettin' out his life's blood."

"Stampede my cows, stranger, ef I don't wish I'd been thar; I'd plugged the whole pesky crowd so full o' lead they'd a sunk in ther perarie. I don't want no feller ter die fur me. Say, stranger, I can't read, but I'll take er couple dozen o' them er books to help his family out, an' you just tell 'em that Idaho Pete'll creep a thousand miles ter help 'em out ef they ever git inter a tight fix. I wish I'd er knowd about this er feller before. I might er dun sumthin' fur his folks."

A LITTLE soldier prays: "O Lord, bless brother Bill, and make him as good a boy as I am."

SPECIAL NOTICE.

MR. FOOTE'S ENGAGEMENTS.

Sunday, Dec. 28, Milton Hall, Hawley Crescent, Kentish Town, at 7 o'clock.

JANUARY 4, Rochdale; 11, Huddersfield; 18, Milton Hall; 20, Walworth; 25, Milton Hall; 27, Walworth.

FEBRUARY 1, Claremont Hall, London; 8, Hall of Science, London; 15, Milton Hall; 22, Liverpool.

MARCH 1, Manchester; 8, Claremont Hall; 29, Glasgow.

APRIL 19, Hall of Science; 26, Hall of Science.

CORRESPONDENTS

All business communications to be addressed to the Manager, Mr. W. J. Ramsey, 28 Stonecutter Street, London, E.C. Literary communications to the Editor, 28 Stonecutter Street, London.

The *Freethinker* will be forwarded, directly 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. 3s.; Three Months, 1s. 7½d.

SCALE OF ADVERTISEMENTS:—Thirty words, 1s. 6d.; every succeeding ten words, 6d. *Displayed Advertisements*:—One inch, 3s.; Half Column, 15s.; Column, £1 10s. Special terms for repetitions.

RECEIVED WITH THANKS.—P. Dawson.

H. G.—Dr. Drysdale's address is 65 Regent Street, W.

J. BELL.—You cannot do better than circulate our tracts and Freethought literature generally.

W. V.—Some illustrated numbers are still to be had. If you state what you require, we will endeavor to supply you. A great deal of so-called "belief" would be more fittingly termed hypocrisy.

DR. HODGSON.—We are obliged for the suggestions.

J. BROUGH.—Cuttings are always welcome.

WELL-WISHER.—Thanks, but most of the matters have been already dealt with.

R. WRIGHT.—Shall appear. Always glad to hear from you.

JESS.—You agree with us in the main, and no more can be expected or desired. Our general policy is clear enough, but it is sometimes necessary to strike out in other directions. The professed friends of Liberty are sometimes her worst enemies. Their recreancy is often worse than the open hostility of foes.

J. R. HOLMES.—Although you can afford sixpence for *Progress*, you must remember that a great many cannot. The reduction in price has largely increased the circulation. As to "getting too much profit," there is little fear of that. We should be glad to see back some of the money *Progress* has cost us. We have made considerable sacrifices to maintain it, believing that it is creditable to our cause, that it exercises a good influence, and that it will some day be self-supporting or even profitable.

PAPERS RECEIVED.—The Liberal (Sydney)—Boston Investigator—Hastings and St. Leonards Times—Sporting Chronicle—Liverpool Echo—Christian World—L'Europe—North Wilts Herald.

SUGAR PLUMS.

THE Northampton Freethinkers have at last obtained the lease of a good hall, and they have specially invited Mr. Foote to come down and open it. The inauguration will take place on Saturday, Dec. 27th. Tea will be on the table at five o'clock, after which Mr. Foote will deliver his address to the members and friends.

PROFESSOR SCOTT, Manchester, finds "much that is cheering in the aspect presented by scepticism in the present day," and he would rather be an Agnostic with sympathetic feelings than a Christian with a callous heart.

ENGLISH missionaries in China are in a state of alarm. If France wins in the present struggle, her influence "will not be for the advancement of the Gospel;" and if China wins her pride will be so inflated that all foreigners and their creeds will have to sing small. The poor sky-pilots are thus between the Devil and the deep sea.

"EVOLUTION," says Professor Drummond, "has given Christianity practically a new Bible." We are glad to hear it, for the old one is utterly played out. Whether the "new Bible" is any better we cannot say until we see a copy of it. Meanwhile Professor Drummond might inform us whether the Lord has given it a fresh imprimatur.

GEORGE MIDDLETON, Aberdeen, is publishing a series of "Letters to Bon-Accordians, by 'Bearing-Rein,'" which promise to cause a stir among the local magnates of Kirk and State. The one to the Rev. A. M. Bannatyne is particularly heterodox, and is very smartly and effectively written.

THE *Christian World* prints a brief notice of James Thomson's "Satires and Profanities," which "are as clever as they are often profane." More than this it dare not say; so it lets Thomson pass with a remark that his book "gives us real pain." No doubt. It must be painful for Christian scribes to find a man of genius so scornful of their occupation, and so indignant at the shameless hypocrisy of nine-tenths of our public press.

THE *Religious Reformer*, a little monthly organ of the Walsall Unitarian Free Church, wonders why the local Recorder persists

in maintaining that criminals are "instigated by the Devil." But that is exactly what our Indictment for Blasphemy stated in the plainest language. We were instigated by the Devil to incur the "great displeasure of Almighty God." It is really a pity that the Unitarians are so slow.

UNDER the Stout ministry the popular creed is daily becoming more discredited in New Zealand. It is estimated by one of the newspapers that one Sunday night recently over 7,000 persons attended places of amusement in Auckland. One of the most practical results of the decay of supernaturalism will probably be to substitute the Sunday holiday for the Sabbatarian weary-day.

MISS ADA CAMPBELL is scoring a great success as a Rationalistic lecturer at Adelaide. Gerald Massey is also making a stir in Australia.

A LONG extract from Mr. Foote's paper on "Cromwell's House of Lords," in the current number of *Progress*, is given in *Public Opinion* for December 19.

THE "People's League to abolish the Hereditary Legislative Chamber," 14 Buckingham Street, Strand, have put out an excellent circular and have already a large number of lecturers. Clubs that have not yet affiliated are requested to communicate with J. Forster, the secretary.

A CAPITAL letter on behalf of "Secularism" appears in the *Hastings and St. Leonards Times*. The writer exposes the gross unfairness of the reckless charges made by Mr. Barnard in his "Christian Evidence" lecture at Hollington, near Hastings.

THE HOLY GHOST AS A PYROTECHNIST.

(Concluded from p. 406; see illustration p. 401.)

BORROWING the eye of faith for the moment, and turning the telescope of our imagination backwards for two thousand years upon the blazing tableau, we begin to discern a sort of lime-light shining from heaven and throwing into special relief the features of fisherman Peter, who stands in the centre, a sort of Billingsgate Jupiter, staring open-mouthed, while the radiant sun or halo of forked lightnings flashing from his bald and shining pate in every direction keeps up the apostolic succession by igniting new celestial fireworks upon the heads and fingers of the minor apostles as fast as those already in action die out. From the outspread Guy-Fawkes-like fingers of his upraised hands shoot forth elongated electric sparks and incandescent sardine stones, emeralds, rubies, and other heavenly jewels borrowed from the book of Revelation for the occasion. There is a fine kaleidoscopic halo of dancing flames around the head of St. John, and a miniature conflagration around the golden locks of St. James. From amidst the hissing spluttering fire-tongues that run riot around St. Philip what seem to be erratic sky-rockets are continually ascending. Emerald-colored serpent-like flames are playing wildly around St. Judas (not Iscariot, for he is probably viewing the opposition fireworks below). These undulating flames are mischievously endeavoring to insinuate themselves into his holy pockets and down his sanctified neck, very much to his dissatisfaction. St. Matthias, whom God has just chosen by lot, has a very graceful set of golden rains playing from his holy forehead. St. James, the less, who perhaps favored the Buddhistic elements of the teachings of the Essenes, seems to wear a curious coronet of flaring Bengal lights, but his saintly equanimity is so much disturbed by the bunch of Chinese crackers which St. Andrew—Merry Andrew as he was probably called by the rest of the party—had mischievously fastened to his tail, that he dances with subdued rage, thereby causing the white-fire tongues of the Bengal lights to appear more wavering and cloven than ever. The blood-red flames that crackle and explode like distant musketry around the strangely ensanguined countenance of St. Bartholomew are a holy prophecy and antetype perchance of a most holy day yet to be honored with his saintly name and his heavenly aid. Ever and anon fresh flames—more God, as the Salvationist blasphemers would say—leap from above and disport themselves in playful lightnings around and amongst the happy twelve, now favoring one and now another with their sacred antics, now circling rapidly around all the shining countenances at once, till the scorched and bewildered apostles appear like a glorious dozen of gigantic Catherine wheels, all let off at once. No wonder their heads are turned. Saint John is now anxious

to appear as Saint Jack-in-the-box; and Simon Zelotes, who after vainly endeavoring to put out his singed whiskers and his blazing hair, has popped on a touch-paper cap, beseeches Peter to ignite him anew. Immediately, as a reward for his faith and zeal, he bursts forth as a huge walking volcano, vomiting flames of every color and every shape, accompanied with tremendous showers of crackers, hand-grenades, fiery serpents and blazing stars. So formidable is he in his proud perambulations, that looks of alarm and dismay, as well as of jealousy and religious hatred, are visible on the faces of the neglected and imperilled ones. Several of the apostles are blinded by the explosions, and clutch wildly at each other's throats. Saint Thomas, who had crept into a quiet corner, now unbolts the door, whereupon the town fireman, who had been fetched by the terrified owner of the house, hurries in and floors the pious firebrand with a well-directed flood—said to have been antotypical of common-sense—and does his best to extinguish the supernatural flames and Greek-fire serpents before the threatened conflagration shall reduce the city to ashes. In the course of this strange but long and tedious elemental contest we notice that the vivid pyrotechny, while gradually paling into mere phosphorescence and absolute gloom, goes through peculiar transformations in the way of pictorial devices. Mitres, crosiers, triple crowns, keys, swords, cannons, appear delineated in curious fire. The St. Catherine wheels grow dark and creak like those of the rack. The flames, as if in desperate dying frolic, hiss, and roar, and shriek around the ghostly forms of visioned heretics, and lick the blood from the streets of ravaged cities. But the fireman, though seriously burned by the scorching flames, and frightfully anathematised, keeps steadily to his work, till fisherman Peter (or salt-petre, the prime element of the religious dynamite) has exhausted his power, has dropped his red-hot keys of hell, and together with his shivering, half-drowned companions is marched off to the county lunatic asylum.

The religious unbelievers in us and our sketches will probably deny our right to found so extensive a superstructure upon so short and incomplete a text. But this is exactly what orthodox preachers and time-serving artists do and are commended for. Why should Freethinkers fear to enlarge upon sacred themes? Why should not we too be inspired if we choose?

Objection may perhaps be taken to the "apparent discrepancies" between our sketch (p. 401) and our description. But what better proof of inspiration could we give? These fault-finding saints had better leave *our* revelation alone and prove their own by some repetition of its alleged marvels. Let them organise a Religious Firework Display in the grounds of the Crystal Palace—for private upper-room *séances* are not good enough nowadays. God maketh his ministers a flaming fire, we know (Psalm civ., 4). Let this text once more be made literally true as on the original White Sunday or Whitsuntide. Surely it will be no impiety to repeat Elijah's challenge and cry "The God that answereth by fire, let him be God" (1 Kings xviii. 24). Why should not the Holy Dove once more outdo the unholy beast (Rev. xiii, 13) who "doeth great wonders, so that he maketh fire come down from heaven on the earth in the sight of all men?" Let Spurgeon, and Parker, and Varley and a few other eminent apostles of modern Christianity be mounted on the great girder side by side, and let the phenomena of Pentecost be repeated just for once. Let the "windows of heaven" be opened in full view of a huge crowd of shilling visitors who behold the beautiful flames descending from heaven and flitting around the great luminaries of church and chapel, manoeuvring about, say, into haloes and aerial rings and nimbuses and glories and flashes and radiations and heavenly Catherine wheels, and innumerable other manifestations of the divine glory, around the glittering recipients of incandescent deity.* How delighted the British public would be to see Cardinal Manning capped with red fire and resplendent with Roman candles, Talmage "sat on" by blue devils and celestial blazes, Moody like a fretful porcupine of forked lightnings, Sanky antlered with branching horns of fire like a glorified Herne the Hunter, General Booth clothed with the

* A scientific friend, who dabbles in electric lightning, tells us that incandescent lamps last about 4,000 hours, and incandescent deities about 2,000 years.

"fire mingled with blood" of Rev. viii., 7, and attitudinising amidst a shower of luminous gold—à la Danae, Canon Gregory revelling amidst a thousand dancing tongues of true blue fire, Dr. Nelson crowned with orange lights, Father O'Grady one mass of green fire and celestial dynamite, Spurgeon simultaneously baptised with cold water and burning Ghost, and the Bishop of London in a huge electrified wig of shining streamers! These would take well, and if the Holy "Pigeon" or Paraclete were to appear in a magnesium parachute or balloon or chariot of fire, or astride of a fiery *tourbillon*, and were presently to conclude the sacred display of incandescent deity by carrying off all his pulpit pets for good, the public applause and satisfaction would positively know no bounds.

W. P. BALL.

CHRISTMAS.

C ruel Christmas, cold and gray;
H atred's hated natal day!
R ed the pen that writes of thee;
I nfamous thy history:
S treams of blood have followed thee
T hrough each anniversary.
M onstrous day and monstrous creed!
A nguished men no longer bleed;
S cience saves them; they are freed.

G. L. MACKENZIE.

A BRICK-YARD DRAMA.

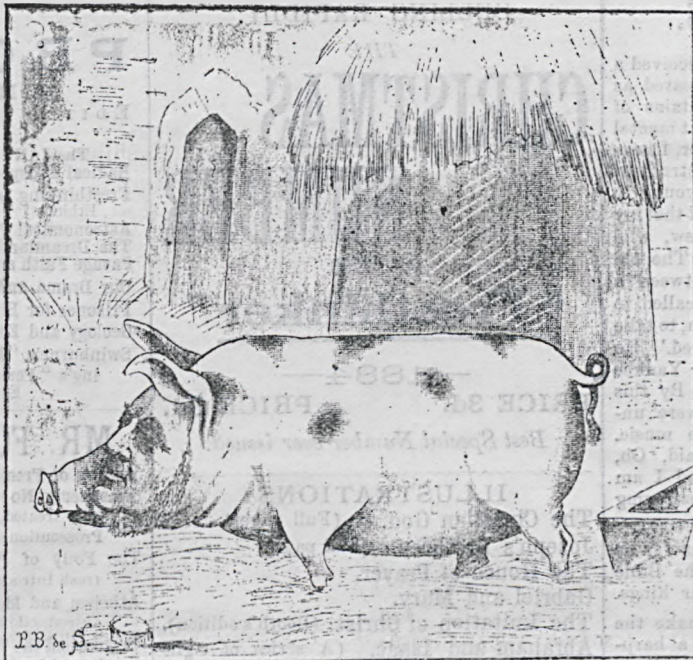
The scene opens with a family rehearsal, in which personal and business matters are rehearsed by a successful father, aged fifty, and an inquiring son, aged six.

S.: What place is this, pa?
F.: This, my child, is a brick-yard.
S.: Whose brick-yard is it, pa?
F.: It belongs to me, my son.
S.: Does those big pile of bricks belong to you, pa?
F.: Yes, my son.
S.: Do those dirty men belong to you, pa?
F.: No, my child; there is no more slavery in this country. Those are free men.
S.: What makes them work so hard?
F.: They are working for a living, my son.
S.: Why do they work for a living?
F.: Because they are poor and obliged to work.
S.: How are they so poor when they work so hard?
F.: I don't know, my child.
S.: Don't somebody steal from them what they earn?
F.: No, my child. What makes you ask me such ridiculous questions?
S.: I thought perhaps some of that dirt got in their eyes and blinded them. But, pa, don't the bricks belong to them after they have made them?
F.: No, child; they belong to me.
S.: What are bricks made of, pa?
F.: Clay, my child.
S.: What! that dirt down there?
F.: Yes, my child; nothing else.
S.: Who does the dirt belong to?
F.: It belongs to me, my son.
S.: Did you make the dirt, pa?
F.: No, my child; God made it.
S.: Did he make it for you especially?
F.: No, my child; I bought it.
S.: Bought it of God?
F.: No; I bought it like I buy anything else.
S.: Did the man you bought it of buy it of God?
F.: I don't know, my child. Ask me something easier.
S.: Anyway, it's a good thing you've got the land, isn't it?
F.: Why, my son?
S.: Because you'd have to make bricks for a living, like those horrid men. Will I have to work for a living when I am a man?
F.: No, my boy; I'll leave you the land when I die.
S.: Don't people turn to clay when they are dead, pa?
F.: What remains of them is clay.
S.: When are you going to die, pa?
F.: I don't know, my son. Why do you ask?
S.: Nothing; only I was thinking what a hard old brick your clay would make.

DEAN SWIFT'S PARODY OF THE APOSTLE'S CREED.—I believe in King George the Second, the greatest monarch between heaven and earth; and in Sir Robert Walpole, his only Minister, our Lord, who was begotten by Barret the attorney, born of Mrs. Walpole, of Houghton, accused of corruption, convicted, expelled, and imprisoned. He went down into Norfolk; the third year he came up again, he ascended into the administration and sitteth at the head of the Treasury, from whence he shall pay all those who shall vote as they are commanded. I believe in Horace's Treaty, the sanctity of the Bishops, the independency of the Lords, the integrity of the Commons, restitution from Spain, resurrection of credit, and peace everlasting. Amen.

THE first prize pig at this year's London Cattle-Show is said to bear the name of William George Glanville Venables Vernon Harcourt. On hearing this extraordinary news, our artist rushed off to the show and made a sketch of the animal.

The progenitors of this animal had been tithe sows or "parson's pigs" for generations. It was, however, thought that this specimen of the porcine tribe might develop into a "learned pig." He was accordingly sent to feed on the provender supplied at the celebrated Temple trough. The "learned pig" threw apace, and was soon ad-



THE PRIZE PIG.

vertised in the *Times* under the name of "Historicus," as giving discourses on International Law, or how to cheat neighboring pigs out of their share of hog's wash by putting rings in their snouts. This brought the animal into repute, and, before he could tell a brief from the brantub, he was provided with a place in the Government sty. He had, however, to pass the exhibition of prize pigs at Oxford, where his claims were rejected. At the Derby show he was more fortunate, the prize being withdrawn in his favor. Since then he has grown fatter and fatter.

ROMANCE OF A BOIL.

HEZEKIAH, the right pious and puissant King of the Jews, being troubled with a sore swelling, wept and wailed and gnashed his teeth. Was he not condemned to die? In answer to his prayer Isaiah was sent with a sixpenny box of figs, to be used as a boil-plaster, warranted as a veritable elixir of life for fifteen years.

But Hezekiah wanted a miracle there and then. Like an impatient child, he could not wait three days to see if he would be enabled to occupy the royal family pew at church according to promise. He merely wanted the shadow on the dial to "return backward ten degrees," as an earnest of good faith on the part of Jahveh. If his whim had not been favored he would, we imagine, have turned Atheist and remained "Iconoclast" to the end of his days.

One redeeming feature in the matter calls for remark, and that is, Hezekiah as the descendant of David, Poet Laureate to the King of Kings, had been taught that with God one thing was impossible—to wit, that he could not lie. God knows everything beforehand, and threatens to terminate his henchman's existence, commands him to make arrangements for the disposal of his property "for he shall surely die." And shortly after this deity, with whom is no variableness or shadow of turning, alters his mind and promises speedy recovery. Hezekiah justly, it seems, asks that this change of purpose shall be ratified with a miracle of several horse-power.

If the recording angel registered the death-sentence we trust he did it with lead pencil, in order the more easily to effect an erasure of the same.

As an illustration of God's everlasting mercy, the following instance of visiting the sins of the fathers upon the children occurs in this matter of Hezekiah. God answered his prayer and granted him a new lease of life; but observe, the only important outcome of it all was that Hezekiah, like Nebuchadnezzar, becoming proud of his precious possessions, exhibited them with too little humility to the embassy from Babylon, who visited him with a present and letters of congratulation sent by Merodach-baladan the son of Baladan, King of Babylon.

Hezekiah committed the crime; but God, who is just, threatens by his prophet Isaiah, not the offender, but his unborn posterity. "They shall be eunuchs in the palace of the King of Babylon."

If anything can prove the barbarian arbitrariness of the Jew "joss," surely such justice as this is damning evidence of it. But what does Hezekiah say to this pleasant prospect for his children? Does he pray this time? Not in the least! His former success in that devout exercise has been paraded as a pre-Christian argument for the doctrine that "Men ought always to pray and not to faint." But he was himself more nearly concerned when he shrank with cowardly horror at the thought of "shuffling off this mortal coil," and like a thief at the eleventh hour, he prayed.

In that he has figured as an exemplar to myriad cowards. The last threat related to his descendants merely, and to any who may have studied the characters of God's prime favorites, Hezekiah's answer to the verdict pronounced is not surprising in the least degree. A selfish and brutal stoicism appears in his words: "Good is the word of the Lord which thou hast spoken. He said, moreover, For there shall be peace and truth in my days." No appeal for the reversal of Jah's decree! No remorse for the humiliation to descend in after years upon his children and kingdom in consequence of his own error! He snugly consoled himself with the thought that he should not make a "personally

conducted" visit to Babylon! And this is the despicable creature whom the pulpit magnifies to a veritable hero, and a Freethinker and National Reformer! Commend to me rather the basest form of modern hero-worship in preference to a degrading and superstitious veneration for such a fusty and malodorous antiquity as this Hebrew Hezekiah, first knight of the Boil!

W. C. SAVILLE.

CHRISTMAS.—The Roman winter-solstice festival as celebrated on Dec. 25 in connection with the worship of the Sun-god Mithra, appears to have been instituted in this special form by Aurelian about A.D. 273, and to this festival the day owns its apposite name of Birthday of the Unconquered Sun, "Dies Natalis Solis invicti." With full symbolic appropriateness, though not with historical justification, the day was adopted in the Western Church, where it appears to have been generally introduced by the fourth century, and whence in time it passed to the Eastern Church, as the solemn anniversary of the birth of Christ, the Christian Dies Natalis, Christmas Day. Attempts have been made to ratify this date as matter of history, but no valid nor even consistent early Christian tradition vouches for it. The real solar origin of the festival is clear from the worship of the Fathers after its institution. In religious symbolism of the natural and spiritual sun, Augustine and Gregory of Nyssa discourse on the glowing light and dwindling darkness that follow the nativity, while Leo the Great, among whose people the earlier solar meaning of the festival evidently remained in strong remembrance, rebukes in a sermon the pestiferous persuasion, as he calls it, that this solemn day is to be honored, not for the birth of Christ, but for the rising as they say, of the new sun.—Dr. E. B. Tylor, "Primitive Culture," vol. ii., p. 270, 1871.

AT an English country house, at luncheon, after morning-service, the popular young curate was accosted by a venerable divine. "How long, sir," said he, "did it take you to write that sermon that you gave us this morning?" "Oh, about a week." "Dear me," replied the other, "it took me four."

LA CANADA is a Mexican village. Its liquor stores bear such suggestive titles as "The Saloon of Mercy" and "The True Faith." Every pulque shop where men and women get mildly exhilarated on the juice of the maguey distilled in divers forms, shows the image of some saint or virgin set up among the bottles. One is called "The Pulqueria of the Mother of God," and scores of others are similarly dedicated.

JAKE AND THE DEVIL.—At a village a few miles west of Newcastle a local preacher going down the street met a blacksmith named Jake, and the following conversation took place:—Preacher: "Where's thoo for, Jake?" Jake: "Oh, aa's gannin' across to Doggy's jerry to hev a gill or twe efter ma dinner." Preacher: "Dis thoo not knaa, Jake, that what wiv thy drinking and yen thing an' another, thoo's gannin' head lang to ye Deevil?" Jake: "Dis thoo not knaa, Tommy, that the Bible says it's six thousand years since the Deevil was thravn oot o' heaven into the bottomless pit. Thoo knaa a botomless pit hes ne bottom, and it's like thraving a steyn doon a pit—the farther it hes te gan the faster it gans. Man, it'll tyek a clivvor scholar te tell what rate he'll be gannin' at noo! But nivvor thoo tell me agyen that aa's gannin' to the Deevil, because thoo knaa wiv six thousand years' start aa hev ne chance te catch him!"

PROFANE JOKES.

"ONE day," says Mr. Beecher, "I received a call from an old lady who had been reared as a strict Presbyterian, in the mountains of Vermont. She appeared to be in great mental distress, and finally said, 'Mr. Beecher, I hear that your Charlie's got a fiddle, an instrument of the devil to lure the souls of the young to perdition.' I assured the good old soul that my son had no fiddle, but that my nephew, who was staying with me, had a violin. The old lady didn't know the difference between a violin and a church-organ, and so I called to my nephew, who was in the next room, to take up his violin and play 'Old Hundred.' He complied, and then followed with 'Yankee Doodle' and the 'Devil's Dream.' By this time the old lady's feet and hands were unconsciously keeping time with the music. When at last she arose to go, she said, 'Oh, Mr. Beecher, you don't know how glad I am that your nephew hasn't got a soul-destroying fiddle but a God-blessed violin!'"

ABRAHAM was not a card player as far as we have any profane record, but the Bible mentions the fact that he beat four kings.

LUKE SPRY says it is possible to make the best of both worlds for he is himself a harp-maker by trade and he has a friend in a linen store. They propose to run a monopoly in the New Jerusalem. Perhaps they would both do better to embark in the brimstone business.

"I DON'T see why you are so particular about your hair," said a churlish husband, "I don't suppose Eve ever wore bangs." "I don't suppose she did," replied his wife, with a quiet smile, "but then there was nobody in the world but her husband to admire her!" The husband then became very thoughtful.

A COLPORTEUR was once conversing with a man on the religious duties. Said he: "Do you attend church regularly?" "Oh! no; I never go to church, but I allers make it a p'int to 'tend all the funerals. They be jest as solemn, but there hisn't no kerlections!"

OLD lady (to modest curate): "Lor', sir, I do like to 'ear you preach extrumpety! Your language is that won'erful fluid!"

AN Irish clergyman, who had been spending the evening with a few friends, looked at his watch just after midnight, and said, "It is to-morrow morning; I must bid you good-night, gentlemen."

Why did the sons of God come after Noah's daughters? Because they thought them ark-angels.

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