

THE FREETHINKER.

EDITED BY G. W. FOOTE.

Sub-Editor—J. M. WHEELER.

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[PRICE ONE PENNY.]



A PROMISING CLOUD.

“Behold there ariseth a little cloud out of the sea, like a man’s hand.”—1 KINGS XVIII., 44.

LAUGHING, to teach the truth, what hinders? . . . Joking decides great things, stronger and better oft than earnest can.—HORACE (Milton).

MR. BRADLAUGH’S OATH.

WE go to press before the House of Commons does its swearing in, and we are therefore not sure as to what will transpire in Mr. Bradlaugh’s case. But we take it for granted that the newspaper announcements are correct; that the Speaker will not allow any intervention between the member for Northampton and his seat; and that Mr. Bradlaugh will take the oath which has been denied him all these years. Of course he does so at his own peril. He may be proceeded against for every vote he gives, on the ground that, being incompetent as an Atheist, he has not taken the oath at all. But the House of Lords has held that only the Government can take action in such a case, and we venture to think that the Government, whether Conservative or Liberal, will do nothing of the kind. If the Tories had a big majority, the case might be different. They would probably gorge their bigotry with a fresh meal. The majority, however, is lacking, so their

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malice is impotent; and we fancy the Liberals have been taught a stern lesson on this subject by the constituencies. With the exception of Lord Randolph Churchill, nearly all Mr. Bradlaugh’s most malignant opponents have been banished to private life; and most of the over-pious Whigs who assisted the Tories to trample on the rights of an English constituency have retired or been kicked off the stage.

Practically, then, we take it that Mr. Bradlaugh wins. For five long years he has been prosecuted, slandered, and treated with every circumstance of infamy by the Tory bigots and their Liberal abettors. For five long years he has borne the brunt of a battle that would have exhausted the energy and the resources of a weaker and less shifty man. For five long years he has fought with more beasts than Paul ever encountered; he has stood on the edge of bankruptcy, and once at least he had to manœuvre from the portal of a gaol. For five long years the upper ten, the parsons, all the hosts of privilege, and all the leaders of the “stupid party,” have resisted his entrance to Parliament in the name of God, and half declared that they would sooner perish than see him publicly profane their fetish. Yet, after all this “double, double toil and trouble,” Mr. Bradlaugh walks into the House, swears like a Christian, takes

his seat, and helps to make laws for the bigots as well as honest folk, without the slightest opposition. He not only wins, but wins, as they say, with his hands down.

What a glorious crew the bigots are! The “blasphemer” takes his oath in the presence of a Tory Ministry. Why, if they had any sense of shame they would never suffer the spectacle. After all their indignant protests, after all their divisions, after all their professions of undying hostility to Atheistic legislators, after all their solemn adjurations of Deity, they ought to retire from office rather than connive at such a shameful catastrophe. But no, they bear it all, to employ a phrase Lord Randolph Churchill foolishly applied to Mr. Bright, with the calculating meanness of their sect. They went into the election battle with *God* on their flag, as well as *Empire*, *Fair Trade*, and similar impostures. But finding that God has not given them the victory they expected, they quietly unstitch his blazon and look after their own interests. They love their Lord; oh dear, yes; but they love themselves a good deal more; and, as a matter of fact, they would abandon a thousand deities sooner than relinquish power or pelf.

For our part we would rather that Mr. Bradlaugh had

taken his seat through an Affirmation Bill, as no doubt he would prefer himself. That he does not, however, is no fault of his. He has more than once stood aside to give the Affirmation Bill a chance; he has worked for it, schemed for it, and we had almost said prayed for it. Yet the bigots defeated it, and they must bear the responsibility of whatever "profanation" there may be in his taking the oath. Why should he be tender to their superstition? Why should he forego his rights to please their whim? Why should the Atheist care a straw for the "honor" of their God? Are there not a hundred deities, quite as powerful and far more respectable, whom they are ready to deride and contemn?

As for the notion of some squeamish Atheists, like Mr. Holyoake, who pretend that Mr. Bradlaugh dishonors himself by invoking God, it has always appeared to us extremely absurd. Mr. Holyoake boasts of what *he* would do in such a case; he would stand below the bar with the dignity of a mule until the House carried an Affirmation Bill to ease his conscience and let him in. But Mr. Holyoake has never had an opportunity of displaying his mettle in that situation; and if ever his countrymen should confer on him the honor he so greatly covets, he would probably find that circumstances alter cases, or rather that cases alter when they are your own. It is astonishing how punctilious we can be when we act by proxy. Vicarious morality is very easy, and widely affected; men lay down a rigorous code for others, and a lax one for themselves. If Mr. Holyoake were in Central Africa, and his life or property depended on his publicly invoking the local god; if he could not obtain justice except by adding "S'welp me Mumbo Jumbo" as a flourish to his affidavit; we do not believe he would hesitate for a moment. He would invoke Mumbo Jumbo or a whole catalogue of deities. Of course if Mr. Bradlaugh pretended to believe in God, when he does not, it would be another matter; but he has openly (*too* openly for his comfort) proclaimed his unbelief, and all the world knows, when he takes an oath, that he is simply going through a formality. Oath or no oath, there is a law to punish perjury; and oath or no oath, there is a law to punish treason. The theory is that God will provide a high temperature for the perjurer hereafter, but the authorities take care to anticipate him by making it hot for the perjurer here; doubtless with a shrewd suspicion that what they do not inflict he will never suffer.

We hope and believe that an Affirmation Bill will be carried before long. That is the only fitting termination of this struggle. While the law remains as it is, it will still be possible for an accidental majority of bigots in the House of Commons to exclude the next "blasphemer" who seeks to enter. We feel sure that Mr. Bradlaugh will do what he can to achieve a radical reform in this direction. The best plan would be to abolish the oath altogether, and we notice as a sign of the times that the Bishop of Peterborough proposes this very settlement, although he wastes a lot of words in trying to prove that "Swear not at all" does not mean what it says. Prayers and all religious forms should be banished from the Legislature, and those members who want heavenly guidance should obtain it from headquarters privately before the House meets. Why should they solicit a dose for Mr. John Morley, Mr. Labouchere, or Mr. Bradlaugh? It is like enforcing the use of a patent medicine. Let every man be the judge of his own constitution, and take his own physic.

Christians are an illogical tribe, but there are exceptions. One of these is Cardinal Newman, that high seraphic subtle soul, to whom we doff our hat, although we hate his creed, and whom Mr. Swinburne well describes as—

"the last flower of Catholic love that blows
Between bare thorns their only thornless rose."

When Cardinal Newman was asked to join the agitation against Mr. Bradlaugh, he declined. As a Christian, he only recognised the Christian oath, and that was abolished when Jews were admitted to Parliament. He will not cling to the "narrow Theistic ledge," and his fellow Christians should imitate his dignity. Either restore the oath "on the true faith of a Christian," and recur to the broad ground of orthodox privilege; or quit the narrow ledge, and, as Newman would say, plunge into the "gulf" of religious liberty.

G. W. FOOTE.

THE BOOK OF DANIEL.

IF a work purporting to be written by a celebrated person at one time and place, but really written by another at another time and place is a forgery, then may the word be justly applied to the book of Daniel.

It is true that in ancient times notions of literary honesty were lax. Little or nothing was thought of giving the name of Moses to laws first promulgated in the reign of Josiah, or of Solomon and David to works written long after their time. This is no more reason why we should not call such productions forgeries than the fact that Jael's assassination of Sisera who had taken refuge in her tent is extolled in the Bible should deter us from pronouncing it a treacherous murder.

That the Book of Daniel is a forgery and a clumsy one, too, will we think be evident from a few considerations. In the first place, the Book of Daniel does not, in the Jewish Bible, have a place among the prophets, but is among the Hagiographa, and there too as one of the last books. The division of the scripture into law and prophets was not made till the time of Ezra. If the book had been written by Daniel in the time of the exile why was it not put with the other prophets? The only reason for its position in the last division of the Jewish scriptures is that it was not known when the second was made. If so it was at least a century later than Daniel himself.

An attempt has been made to overcome the force of this objection by the quibble that although Daniel was endowed with the gift of prophecy he was not born to the prophetic office, and so his writing was not included among the prophets. Those who pretend this, forget that Amos is included among the prophets, although he himself tells us (vii., 14) he was not a prophet, neither was he a prophet's son.

The contents of the book are even more conclusive. While pretending to be written by Daniel (vii., 28; viii., 2; ix., 2; x., 1; xii., 5), he is nevertheless for the most part spoken of in the third person, and praise is given to him which only an immodest egotist would apply to himself. Thus it is said that in all matters of wisdom and understanding he was ten times better than Nebuchadnezzar's wisest men, and that he was without error or fault (i., 19; vi., 4; see also v., 11; ix., 23; xii.). Daniel is represented as being president of the wise men, "master of the magicians, astrologers, Chaldeans and soothsayers." It is improbable the Babylonian king should appoint a despised captive to such a position, and even more so that a scrupulous Jew, as Daniel is represented to have been, should have accepted the office of presiding over a class containing idolatrous priests.

This is by no means all. It is impossible to harmonise the legends of the book with the records of profane history, which know nothing of Darius the Mede, king of Babylon; nothing of Nebuchadnezzar's insanity, or of his eating grass for seven years like oxen; nothing of Belshazzar as among the list of Babylonian monarchs. On the contrary, Nabonadius was the last king of Babylon before the fall of that city.

Still more decisive in favor of the late origin of the book is the whole scope of its historical visions, which extend from the time of its alleged author to the age of Antiochus Epiphanes (the "vile person" of chap. xi., 21), that is to say, to the actual date of the real writer. This consideration alone has determined rational critics to place the date at about B.C. 168.

Early in the Christian era both Hippolytus the Christian, and Porphyry the Pagan, argued that the book belonged to the age of Antiochus, and this is borne out by the fact that Jesus, the son of Sirach, author of Ecclesiasticus (B.C. 200—180)—who from the forty-fourth to the fiftieth chapter praises the most distinguished men of his nation, from the patriarch Enoch to Simon the high priest—omits all mention of Daniel. The Aramaic, in which a large portion of Daniel is written, is more similar to the language of the Targums than to that of any portion of the Hebrew Bible.* The description of manners is more Persian than Babylonian. The doctrinal ideas of the book are not those of the time of the exile, but of the Maccabean age. The Messiah and the Ancient of Days have a different aspect from

* THIRTEEN has always been an unlucky number. Adam's thirteenth rib was the cause of all his troubles.

* See Dr. Rowland Williams's Introduction to Desprez on the Book of Daniel.

their representation in earlier parts of the Bible. Guardian angels of nations are first noticed in Daniel. The names of Gabriel and Michael were unknown before, and the book is the first to mention the resurrection of the dead and everlasting life. All these circumstances tell in favor of the same result, but what perhaps is as decisive is that throughout the book a number of Greek words are found. Among the most striking are the names of Greek musical instruments, as the sackbut, psaltery, dulcimer and harp (cither). It is hardly possible, as Lenormant himself acknowledges, that these instruments should have been known in Babylon by Greek names in the time of Nebuchadnezzar. But we know from Polybius Athenæus (x., 52) that the dulcimer was a favorite instrument at the court of Antiochus Epiphanes (175—164 B.C.).

There is indeed some reason to surmise that Greek was the original language of Daniel. The Greek version of Daniel commences with the story of Susannah and the elders, and gives the Song of the Three Children, which although not found in the Protestant Bible, has been incorporated in the Prayer Book. It is to be noticed that the words found in our version (chap. iii., 24), "Then Nebuchadnezzar the king was astonished" (as well he might be), follow more naturally after this song. The book proceeds, as in our version, till the end of the twelfth chapter. Then follows the story of Bel and the Dragon, succeeded by that of Habbakuk the Prophet, who is borne through the air by the hair of his head in order to carry food to Daniel in the den of lions. All these portions are omitted in the Protestant Bible because not found in the Hebrew. The story of Susannah contains two Greek puns which go to prove that it was originally written in Greek, and in the same direction is the fact that the meaning assigned to the handwriting on the wall (Dan. v., 25—28) corresponds with the Greek words but not with the Hebrew.

One might think that Christians would gladly avail themselves of the results of rational criticism to be free from the supposed necessity of believing such monstrous miracles as those of the salamandrine Jews, upon whom a burning fiery furnace had no effect, and of the lions endowed with supernatural respect for a prophet. But no. To allow that any portion of God's holy word is nothing but a romance would be too dangerous. Besides, does not Jesus Christ testify that the "abomination of desolation" was spoken of "by Daniel the prophet?" and to suppose that he had not full knowledge of the question is to fall into the heresy of John P. Robinson, he who said "They didn't know everything down in Judee."

J. M. WHEELER.

THAT'S WHY.

(Lieutenant Greely says the theory which places the Garden of Eden at the Pole rests on sound scientific grounds).

AND could it be that long ago,
When earth began to roll,
Old Adam delved in frost and snow,
And dwelt beside the Pole?
Oh for some lofty poet's pen
The rich romance to weave,
Of how he toiled by day, and then
Went home to Eve at eve!

It might have been,—yet, after all,
I don't see how it might,
For there the natives great and small
In skins and furs are dight;
And can you ask me not to doubt,
Amid such freezing rack,
That Adam walked about without
A rag upon his back?

Yes, I must own,—I truly grieve
To have to ask your pardon,—
Lieutenant G., I can't believe
That that was Eden's Garden,
Because,—though parsons backed your case
In churches and in chapels,—
The Arctic region's not the place
For cultivating apples!

—The Judge.

NATURE, according to the orthodox picturing, is base and cruel; what is the inference to be drawn regarding its author? If Nature be "red in tooth and claw," who is responsible?—
Tyndall.

ACID DROPS.

A NEW sect has sprung up in Canada, whose doctrine is that women have no souls because the Bible nowhere mentions women angels. The leader is a Frenchman.

MUCH might be said for this Frenchman's view. Not only are Michael, Gabriel and the rest all males, but these angels were often sent on delicate missions to women, upon which females would surely have been employed, had there been any in heaven. Moreover, the sons of God had to come down to earth to get daughters of men. Jesus tell us there is neither marrying nor giving in marriage in heaven, and if any women are there, how could marriage be prevented? Only in Adam's nostrils did Jahveh breathe the breath of life. If this does not satisfy female Bible believers that they have no chance of kingdom come, let them ponder the fact announced in Revelation that "there was silence in heaven for the space of half an hour."

THE sect of Jezreelites, established near Chatham, are more considerate for the fair sex. They declare that God is androgyne, that is at once a man and a woman; and like Theodore Parker pray to "Our Father and Mother which art in heaven."

IN the *Christian Herald*, a pious sailor narrating his experience during a storm, says: "There, just above us, was a break in the iron sky, a real rift of blue! I felt as if it was the smile of God Almighty, and I could not help shouting, 'there he is!' And there he was to me, as clearly as ever man saw the face of a friend!" This kind of thing readily explains the origin of the mythical accounts of Moses talking to God face to face and seeing his back parts. A little repetition of the story in less exact times than these would have made the sailor see God in as literal a sense as Moses, Isaiah and Amos saw him.

BISHOP FOSTER of New York says: "There is a lack of information on the progress of Christianity. The facts are misstated daily in pulpits all over the country. Ministers hesitate to present the worst side for fear of causing discouragement. They create hopes that are never to be realised."

THE spiritists of America are breaking into two camps. The orthodox portion proclaim that every true medium is commissioned by the great medium between God and man, Christ Jesus, and that there can be no union between Christian and infidel spiritists; while the latter declare that the Bible is unreliable and the orthodox notions of heaven and hell entirely false. It is evident there are "lying spirits" about somewhere.

THE utility of prayer has been demonstrated by the Rev. J. Watson, rector of Orton Longueville, Hauts, who twisted his leg and dislocated his hip in rising from his devotions. Like Jacob, he had been "wrestling with God," who took an unfair advantage of him.

SAN FRANCISCO has produced a new prophet, one Lewis, who claims to be the Messiah and—if we understand him rightly—Satan in one. He has published a little pamphlet Bible, in which he declares: "Christ always comes as a Crank; if he did not know different to you, you would not need him, and yet you damned illogical fools, you use the very epithet of 'Crank' as conclusive evidence against him." The following is one of his "hymns":

"Enoch before, then Jesus, now as Lewis,
I shout again: Believe in Me and Live,
Professing Jesus. Beware what thou doest
I, only I, can now your sins forgive."

Lewis is evidently another "good man gone wrong" through Bible superstition.

A NOTICE posted on the door of St. Margaret's Church, Liverpool, suspending the Rev. Bell-Cox for six months, was taken no notice of by that Romanising clerical, who declares that he does not recognise the authority of a secular power in spiritual matters. That is, he desires to retain office in a Church with national endowments without obeying the laws which Parliament has prescribed. The "spiritual matters" are the use of altar lights, bowing before a crucifix, making the sign of the cross, and similar important ceremonies.

THE amiable Broad Churchmen and Nonconformist ministers who believe that the Church of England can be reformed into a genuine representative of the Christian thought of the nation, should take up "Whitaker's Almanac," from which it appears that the Christian thought of the nation is made up of over two hundred different sects, including Mormons. Just imagine a committee from each of these sects drafting a constitution and creed of a reformed Church widened to suit all their idiosyncracies! Parishioners may meet in harmony for the purpose of supplying themselves with such useful articles as gas or water, but when it comes to supplying the fiery spirit of religion, we may be sure that each religious dram-drinker will clamor for his favorite beverage, regardless of the growing party, who believe in total abstinence from the holy spirit.

THE *Protestant Standard* thinks that Birmingham will "sooner or later realise a bitter and withering curse" for permitting education to be really secular. It declares that "if Radical and Godless Birmingham could prosper while showing her contempt for the Word of God in the manner she is doing, we should regard it as a worse calamity than were we to hear of her being swallowed up by an earthquake." Not only does Birmingham prosper by attending to secular education and leaving religion alone, but only so does any city, nation or person prosper.

PRINCE BISMARCK, the man of blood and iron, presented by the Pope with the Order of Christ, is one of the funniest results of the diplomacy which appointed his infallible holiness to judge as to the ownership of the Caroline Islands.

A PUBLICAN at Charlwood was summoned for selling beer on a Sunday morning. A constable saw the servant leave the public-house and go to the rectory with a carpet bag, which it was admitted contained bottled ale. As the rector had ordered the ale on the previous afternoon, the case was dismissed.

ACCORDING to *Truth*, the Vicar of Masham, thus concluded a sermon to his flock: "And now, friends, which is it to be—Salisbury, Churchill and Heaven; or Gladstone, Chamberlain and Hell?"

ACCORDING to the statistics of denominations in the United States, the Catholics claim to be by far the most numerous body, having over 6,307,000 adherents. Then follow the Methodist Episcopalians with 2,500,000, the Baptists with 2,123,000, the Lutherans with 684,570. The Congregationalists number 383,685, the Mormons 110,377, the Dunkers 90,000. The Jews number 13,683, the Unitarians 18,000, and the Universalists 26,238. The Freethinkers are not given.

WARD BEECHER has published in a volume his sermons on Evolution and Theology, which he seeks to combine, although, in our opinion, they are related to each other as water and fire. The great American preacher, however, flings overboard more than half the Christian cargo, such as the talking serpent, the forbidden tree, and the primitive garden. He finds all these things to be "allegories." In other words, they are fables found out. This is a very poor compliment to the Almighty. We fail to see any wisdom or justice in the Lord's writing a book for our guidance which nearly always means something else than it says.

BEECHER makes one significant admission. As a proof of man's fall, he says that modern Greece has fallen far below the Greece of Phidias, of Solon, and of Plato; while the Italy of to-day is many degrees below the Italy of the Roman Republic. What is this but saying that Christianity has proved itself inferior to Paganism? History shows that Shelley was right in supposing that modern civilisation would have been infinitely better if it had continued on the lines laid down by Greece and Rome.

GOD and Mentone are doing Spurgeon a deal of good between them. He hopes to experience the full efficacy of prayer in another month, when the weather will have improved.

By the way, Spurgeon has again declared that he doesn't like the Revised New Testament. He approves the fresh edition of the Old Testament, because it tones down some of the blarney stories that school-children begin to laugh at. But the new edition of the second half of the blessed book whittles down some of the good old blood and thunder doctrines which Spurgeon lives by, and as at his time of life he cannot take up a fresh business, he resents the innovation as a nuisance.

THE *Christian World*, in taking a new year's prospect, exhibits the wonderful effects of Christian morality. It finds that our annexation of Burmah was clearly right, and chuckles over the thought that Christian missionaries will soon be steaming up the Irrawaddy. On the other hand, it goes almost black in the face at the idea of Ireland obtaining Home Rule, and insists that England's first duty to Ireland is to "reassert the majesty of law." This simply means, at bottom, that stealing foreign countries is all right if Protestant missionaries can evangelise them; while granting justice to a part of the United Kingdom which happens to be Catholic is a frightful sin.

A GHOST has been captured at Felling, near Newcastle. It turned out to be a young man of good position in the town. Probably Mary's ghost was something similar.

MR. SWINBURNE, in his fine article on Middleton, in the *Nineteenth Century*, alludes to the Salvation Army as "the yelling Yahoos, whom the scandalous and senseless license of our own day allows to run and roar about the country unmuzzled and unwhipped."

GENERAL BOOTH affects the importance of his bastard military title. Recently he had a business engagement in London, and about twenty minutes before the appointed hour an aide-de-camp called with a big S. A. on his cap, and said, "Are you ready to meet the General? he is coming at — o'clock." A few minutes after another aide-de-camp came, and before the twenty minutes

expired no less than six of these gentry called on the same business. That's the way the money goes. We hope Booth's subscribers are satisfied with the result.

THE Church Army is a copy of the Salvation Army, and practises the same methods, to the same annoyance of sober citizens. The law will not interfere with their vagaries in the public thoroughfares, because they are Christians, and Christianity sanctifies any impudence. But they can be routed by their own tactics, as the following story will show.

A CONTINGENT of the Church Army turned the quiet Sunday afternoon of a Kentish town into a pandemonium. To make matters worse for their opponents, they pitched right opposite the house of a noted Freethinker, and played and sang with asinine lung power straight at his front windows. He stood this till his patience was exhausted, and then determined to stop the nuisance. Fair notice was given that if they haunted his house in that way he would teach them a lesson. Their only reply was a laugh. On the following Sunday they turned up at the old spot in fine form. Just as they were in the full stream of discord, the injured Freethinker sallied out of his house, armed with a big bell taken from a dismantled school. Walking up behind the "Captain" of the awkward squad, he swung the bell with all his might, and the sweet psalmists were compelled to cease. They remonstrated, but directly they resumed their performance he resumed the swinging of his bell. At last they gave it up and moved on. But the determined Freethinker followed them with the dreadful clapper, and whenever they stopped and struck up a hymn he favored them with an accompaniment. They were fairly beaten, and the upshot of the whole matter is that they have thought it prudent to cease playing and singing in the streets on Sunday altogether. The big bell is known to be in reserve, and they will not dare its terrors.

THE Rev. A. Johnson, a clerk in holy orders, lodging in Gratwicke Road, Worthing, has been subjected to the mild fine of a guinea for indecently exposing himself.

THE appeal of the Rev. James Craig, pastor of the Bridge Street Presbyterian Church, Blyth, against the order to contribute 5s. weekly towards the maintenance of the illegitimate child of Lydia Wilkinson, has been dismissed, although the rev. gentleman (?) swore most positively that he had never outraged the girl, as alleged. The worthy sky-pilot will, it is expected, seek fresh fields for the exercise of his holy calling.

JOHN WESLEY BLACK, of Lawrence, Kan., is under sentence of forty-two years' imprisonment, having been convicted of seducing eleven girls, whose ages ranged from eleven to thirteen years. He was superintendent of the Sunday school, and was considered one of the pillars of the church. He is about forty years of age, and has a wife and several children. Several attempts to lynch him have been made.

ACCORDING to the *Staffordshire Sentinel*, the Salvation mission at Hanley, under the command of Gipsy Smith, has collapsed, owing to a falling off in the funds, from which Gipsy Smith took for his share six pounds per week.

MR. ALBERT SMITH, a curate of the Church of England, has a mad letter in the *Blackburn Times* on the question whether the earth is round or flat. There can be no question as to which Mr. Albert Smith is, since he takes the biblical view that the earth has ends and corners.

THE Leicester Board of Guardians have received a cool request from an officer in the Salvation Army, who desired that two of his subordinates stationed at Melton could be admitted to the workhouse, as they were suffering from a loathsome disease which they desired to keep dark from the members of the Melton contingent.

IRISH Protestants are now reaping the harvest of their fathers sowing. Lord Coleridge declared, on the occasion of our trial in the Court of Queen's Bench, that he knew nothing in history at all approaching the long and systematic persecution of Catholics in Ireland. Well, the Catholics are now getting the upper hand, and it is the turn of the poor Protestants to cry out. One of them writes a long jeremiad to the *Christian World*, from which it appears that boycotting is being practised against the religious minority. "A Catholic," he says, "dare no longer enter the house of a Protestant as a friend; he dare only give a shy recognition in the streets. A Catholic who is a professional man dare not enter a club to read the papers if it be a club that Protestants enter, or he would lose his practice." Much more to the same effect follows. What a remarkably happy family the Christians are!

"THE GRAND OLD MAN" Cigars are so named because, like the Grand Old Man himself, they have never been equalled.—Thornes, Maker, Bradford, Yorks. All Liberal and Radical Clubs should try them.—ADVT.

SPECIAL NOTICE.

MR. FOOTE'S ENGAGEMENTS.

Sunday, Jan. 17, Secular Institute, East Parade, Huddersfield; at 11, "The Church in Danger;" 3, "God's Mother;" 6.30, "An Hour in Hell."

JANUARY 24, Liverpool; 28, Hackney Workmen's Club; 31, Hall of Science, London.

MARCH 7, Hall of Science, London; 14, Milton Hall; 28, Hall of Science, London.

FEBRUARY 4, Walworth; 7, Brighton; 14, Milton Hall; 21, Manchester.

CORRESPONDENTS.

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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. 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.—J. Watson.

MAHOMET.—Our tracts are designed to suit all tastes; what you don't like others do. As a matter of fact, the very ones you mention (with one exception) are those that sell least. Southwell's article on the Jew-Book was dealt with in the *Freethinker* three years ago, and the best parts reprinted.

BEEZEBUB.—No doubt Pantheism is an interesting speculation, and when we have nothing better to do we will give it a turn. Meanwhile our time is fully occupied in attacking Christianity, which you appear to like as much as we do. Nor is Darwinism, which you appear to doubt, a matter we can discuss with you. We refer you to the works of Darwin, Huxley, Hæckel and other biologists. If they don't satisfy you, there is no use in our trying to. By the way, however, you will find the human tail you are in search of at the end of the spine in any skeleton. In the embryo the tail is very pronounced. How the universe came is a very big subject, and as we were not present when it made a start (if it ever did) we decline to commit ourselves.

A. K. SEARLE, 51 Nelson Street, Plymouth, is anxious to save us from rushing headlong to hell. Having no time to answer through the post all the gentry who want to save us alive oh! we must answer him in this column. He sends us two convincing cases of Atheists converted to Christianity, both of them anonymous. Perhaps our Plymouth friends will press Mr. Searle for a little fuller information. We are also informed of a terrible infidel-slayer called Lee, hitherto unknown to fame, who is obviously too strong for the Secular champions, as is proved by the fact that when Mr. Foote last visited Plymouth he did not hunt up the noble Lee and dare him to the death. As a matter of fact Mr. Foote has offered to debate at Plymouth with the Rev. Dr. McCann, but it is more difficult to get a Christian minister into a public debate on his creed than it is to persuade a pig by the tail to walk backwards.

FREETHINKER.—We noticed Mr. Rossiter's letter in the *Weekly Dispatch*. He is an amiable old gentleman who fancies he can change Atheists with a pail of soapsuds. He has been at it for years without a shred of success, although it must have cost him a good deal in soap.

A. NICHOLS.—Thanks. See "Acid Drops."

V. ROGERS writes that the South London Branch N. S. S., after being homeless for six months, has secured a comfortable room at St. George's Coffee Tavern, 106 Westminster Bridge Road.

H. P. BOWDEN.—Cuttings always welcome. We unwittingly did the Rev. H. R. Hadden an injustice, for which the reporters were responsible. It was only the able-bodied loafers in the workhouse that he wished to make miserable. Still he might have chosen a better occasion.

A. WALL.—It was a jocosse piece of shorthand for "more knave than fool."

H. SMITH says that the Bethnal Green Branch N. S. S. is striving to form a library, and will be grateful for any gift of books. Send to the President, Mr. Rossitti, 19 Crescent Place, Hackney Road, E.

H. G. BAILEY.—Thanks. We will try to work up the suggestion.

A. SERCOMBE.—*Judy* meant the verse to be satirical, not for Free-thought, but against it. A priest can enter a French hospital, but he must be sent for, and only visit the person who sends for him. The priests call this persecution.

PLATO.—The text has been illustrated before. Glad to hear the "Crimes of Christianity" has helped you greatly in fighting the enemy at Kingsland Green. The delay in issuing Part XV. has been unavoidable. Other publications have necessitated a brief pause. Next week.

R. EDWARDS assures us that no questions are asked as to the belief or non-belief of candidates for admission to the Manchester Unity of Oddfellows.

G. STONE.—Not bad, but hardly up to the mark.

SIGNALMAN.—Always pleased to hear from you. Glad Free-thought is spreading so on board. When you are on shore and near our office, give us a call.

W. J. BARNES.—Sir Isaac Newton wrote a book on the Prophecies, which is a standing instance of how foolish a philosopher may be when he tries to make sense out of nonsense. The theory that days mean years has been put forward by many theologians. We will try to look up the passage for you by next week.

C. GENTSCH, newsagent, Paddington Green, supplies the *Freethinker* and all Secular literature.

H. HENDERSON.—We don't believe much in the means of advertising you refer to. Few people buy a paper without having read it once

or twice. The best plan is for our readers to lend their copy about, or an extra copy if they keep their own for binding.

TUTBURY.—Mr. Ramsey will be pleased to show you through the printing-office if you call when he is in. Perhaps it would be as well to make an appointment with him.

S. S.—Thanks for the cutting. On the other matter we must agree to differ. Declamation on a matter of taste is a waste of words. No doubt you and your friends are trying to promote Free-thought; we only wish you had a little more success.

CORRESPONDENCE should reach us not later than Tuesday if a reply is desired in the current number. Otherwise the reply stands over till the following week.

A CATALOGUE of the Progressive Publishing Company's Works can be obtained at 28 Stonecutter Street, London, E.C.

PAPERS RECEIVED.—Bath Herald—Pall Mall Gazette—Republican—Lucifer—Paris Morning News—San Francisco Light—Liverpool Mercury—Portsmouth Evening News—Midland Free Press—Staffordshire Sentinel—Leicester Daily Post—Boston Investigator—Liberator—Liberty—Blackburn Times—Truth—Newcastle Chronicle.

"FREETHINKER" PRIZES.

We offer another PRIZE OF ONE GUINEA for the best Comic Bible Sketch, and a PRIZE OF ONE GUINEA for the best Religious Topical Sketch suitable for reproduction; the competition to close on February 1.

The drawing must be done on white cardboard or thick white paper in pure black ink. The lines should be bold and well distinct. Washes or colors must not be used. The size should be about one-third broader than our ordinary single or double column.

SUGAR PLUMS.

THE Camden Hall, Liverpool, is always too small for Mr. Foote's audiences, and many have to be turned away from the doors in the evening. A remedy for this state of things would have been provided long ago by engaging a larger building, but the Liverpool hall-keepers asked a preposterous price for their places. They were willing to run the risk of perdition but not at the market rate, so they wanted three or four times as much from Freethinkers as they took from Christians. Fortunately, there is now a little improvement in this respect, and on the 24th inst. Mr. Foote will lecture in the Concert Hall, Lord Nelson Street, morning, afternoon and evening. As some of those who have been disappointed on previous occasions may not notice the change, and may fancy there will be no chance of getting in, we trust our Liverpool friends will do their best to let everybody know the altered condition of affairs. The Concert Hall will hold nearly two thousand people.

THE London Hall of Science was much better filled last Sunday evening than could reasonably have been expected, considering the diabolical weather. Those who came to the lecture, and they were several hundreds, paid Mr. Foote a very handsome compliment.

THE *Boston Investigator* for December 30 contains an eloquent tribute to the memory of Elizur Wright, the veteran Freethinker and Abolitionist, from the pen of Col. R. G. Ingersoll.

THE *Journal des Debats* published in its *feuilleton* of New Year's Day a piece of what the *Guardian* calls "shocking blasphemy," from the pen of the renowned Ernest Rénan. It is a phantasy, entitled "L'Année 1866, Prologue au Ciel" (the year 1866, prologue in heaven), and depicts God, *L'Eternel*, dozing in a cosy corner of the celestial mansion, where he "reposes in the intervals of his inactivity," and Gabriel reports the gossip of "that troublesome planet the earth," the government of which the *Eternel* confesses to have sadly mismanaged. Gabriel's gossip gives room for some playful rubs at the politicians below. *L'Eternel* tells Gabriel that if he had written romances they would have been "très inconvenants," very unseemly, while Gabriel reminds the old one that he liked to have Dumas, Balzac, or de Stendhal read to him when tired of Spinoza. God determines to turn over a new leaf at the new year, and to henceforth sacrifice fewer beings in pursuit of the objects he has in view. The *Guardian* declares that if Rénan wished to burlesque, he ought to have burlesqued the Pagan deities, and called *L'Eternel* Jupiter. That is, it is quite willing any other religion should be satirised except its own.

Truth, of Pittsburgh, says: "We have received the Christmas Number of the London *Freethinker*. It is profusely illustrated, filled with appropriate reading matter, and presents a fine artistic and typographical appearance. As a Christmas present we are proud of it, and accept it with many thanks. We wish our highly-esteemed contemporary a happy new year and many new subscribers." *Lucifer*, of Valley Falls, Kansas, also praises our Christmas Number as "better than previous ones."

SAID Bobby to the minister at dinner—"Can a church whistle?" "Why do you ask?" "'Cos pa owes twelve dollars back pew rent, and he says he's going to let the church whistle for it."

GOD'S WINGS.

I do not profess to be original in my choice of a subject this week. I only follow once more in the steps of that eminently successful Yankee saint Talmage, who has been preaching on "The Wings of God." His text, taken from Ruth ii, 12., is: "The Lord God of Israel, under whose wings thou art come to trust." Under the pious guidance of Talmage and the Bible one cannot be far wrong in investigating the subject of the "wings" and "feathers" of this principal winged fowl of heaven, whose species and general plumage are as yet almost entirely unknown to even the best of our modern ornithologists.

David often speaks of God's wings (Ps. xvii., 8; xxxvi., 7; lvii., 1; lxiii., 7, etc.). Talmage reminds us that Christ compares himself to a hen gathering her chickens under her wings, and he refers to the text in Deuteronomy (xxxii., 11), where God is represented as an eagle stirring up her nest and fluttering over her young and carrying them on her wings. He is sure that "the wings of God are strong wings"—stronger even than the wings of a sea-fowl that can fly for six or seven days without resting. He can bear a whole nation upon them. In Exodus xix., 4, God says to the Israelites: "I bare you on eagles' wings, and brought you unto myself." They are "mighty to save" and "mighty to destroy." "The flap of an eagle's wing has death in it," says Talmage, but the Lord's pinions are so much stronger that—

"He flapped his wing, and the antediluvian world was gone. He flapped his wing, and Babylon perished. He flapped his wing, and Herculaneum was buried. He flapped his wing at Sedan, and the Napoleonic dynasty ceased. Before the stroke of that pinion a whole fleet is nothing. An army is nothing. An empire is nothing. A world is nothing. The universe is nothing."

Talmage is always endeavoring to be sublime, and as constantly taking the step beyond and arriving at the ridiculous. He ought to make a working model of his almighty fowl flapping its wings and sweeping away fleets and cities; and he should place it beside another working model of his God as a barber shaving the nations, Yankeeedom included. A collection of such figures, made to act promptly as the visitors' pennies are dropped in to stir up the *deus ex machina* to its holy work of flapping the wings and swinging the arms and legs of the divine models, would be interesting and amusing; and being thoroughly biblical and Talmagean in origin, it could not be blasphemous. The model-maker would be somewhat puzzled, however, to preserve the congruity of his figures, for the omnipotent fowl flapping his wings and apparently crying cock-a-doodle-do in the highest, would also have to be fitted up with Wellington boots or their ancient equivalent. Talmage at least reminds us in the wing-flapping paragraph that there is "none to tie the sandals of his feet, for they are the clouds."

The "wings of the Almighty" are very "swift," it seems, as well as strong. They are swifter than an express train, swifter than the thrush's wing, the flamingo's wing, or the eagle's wing. The precise speed at which they travel is not mentioned. This is probably not easily ascertainable, owing to the enormous dimensions and peculiar spread of the said wings; "for broader than all space, broader than thought, wide as eternity, from tip to tip, are the wings of the Almighty." Although these wings are broader than all space; and so, one imagines, must necessarily cover everything, yet it seems that there is much outside their shelter, and therefore apparently outside space; for Talmage strenuously invites these outsiders, who somehow are not beneath a protecting roof broader than all space, to "come under the wings of the Almighty"—"under the broad wings of the Almighty." But if Talmage's rash statements are trustworthy those wings must be already extended over the whole universe, and thus it is nonsense to ask us to come under wings which already abundantly cover all creation. Consistency, however, is the last thing in the world to be expected of Talmage, or of Christians generally.

Of the number of wings possessed by the Christian deity, who in future, I suppose, must be classed zoologically as a bird, or else as a missing link, nothing is said. "His wing" is sometimes spoken of in the singular, but it can hardly be that he had only one, for his "wings" are so frequently mentioned in the plural. These can hardly be the small pair of wings which God wears as the Holy Dove,

for these are not large enough to carry nations and roof a universe, nor strong enough and violent enough to wreck fleets and flap nations into nothingness. Perhaps he has four wings, like the four-faced cherubims seen by Ezekiel (i, 6). As the Trinity is presumably three-faced, if not three-headed, he may also have three wings to correspond—carnal cavillings against this idea having no relevance when the sublime mysteries of religion are in question. More probably, however, he has at least six wings, like his seraphims, as described in Isaiah vi., 2; for he would hardly care to be outdone even in the matter of wings by one of his creatures. We may also simplify matters and evade certain difficulties by supposing that these six wings are also only two wings, just as the Trinity is Unity. God the Father wears a pair, God the Son a pair, and God the Holy Ghost a pair; and yet there are not three pairs of wings, but only one pair. Perhaps these divine six-in-two wings are full of eyes, like the wings of the cherubims in Ezekiel x., 12.

Usually God is too lazy to do his own flying. In the beginning he moved upon the face of the waters with a flight presumably like that of a sea-gull or an albatross, but now he prefers to ride on a cherub and fly on the wings of the wind (Ps. xviii., 10).

Talmage shows us that God as the mother-bird looks after his children in their nest. As the mother deserts her brood for a time and returns with a meal for her clamorous open-mouthed little ones—

"So sometimes God leaves us. He goes off to get food for our soul, and then he comes back after a while to the nest, and says, 'Open thy mouth wide, and I will fill it.'"

His—or her—motherly wings are "gentle wings," and of the downiest description, in proof of which Talmage quotes the Psalmist (xci., 4): "He shall cover thee with his feathers." The mother-bird sometimes unintentionally tramples a weakly nestling to death, but Talmage assures us that "no one that ever came under the feathers of the Almighty was trodden on." God also seem to shed his feathers from the sky somewhat as Mother Goose is supposed to be plucking her geese when snow falls. Talmage tells us that the blackbird, the meadow-lark, the red flamingo and the pelican "give but a very faint idea of the beauty that comes over the soul when on it drop the feathers of the Almighty." What a strange animal this feathered God must be.

Christians think it very unfair that Freethinkers should ridicule their ridiculous notions of God. Only one side of their anthropomorphic imagery must be noticed, and then of course only in a favorable, submissive and solemnly impressive style. To perceive the absurd aspect of their metaphors is impious, to exhibit it to others is crime. They forget that truth requires liberty for both aspects of a question, and that ridicule is the true antidote for superstition. It is ridicule, and not mere reasoning, that keeps down the belief in ghosts. Reason itself will teach man to laugh his idle fears away. Gods and ghosts have no more deadly enemy than ridicule founded on human reason in conflict with religious unreason. W. P. BALL.

A MOTHER, whose crying infant made the sermon of her pastor almost inaudible, was going from the church when the clergyman spoke up, saying: "My good woman, don't go away. The baby doesn't disturb me." "It isn't for that I leave, sir," was the reply; "it's you disturb the baby!"

No preacher likes to see his auditors asleep. The *Detroit Free Press* reports the following as a part of the exhortation not of Brother Gardner but of Brother Gabriel, who has charge of a colored congregation in New Orleans: "One of de biggest little sins, my frens, am de sin ob gwine ter sleep in meetin'. Whiles I is rastlin' with Satan fur yore pore mizzerbul souls, you is takin' good, comferbul little cat-naps rite in de tempul ob de Lawd, an' 'fore dese eyes, w'at is streemin' wid tears at res'in' on such desput wickedness. Bewar'! my breddren an' sistern in de Lawd, les' you duz like de giddy gal in de Testament, whar de grate 'Postle Paul wuz a-preachin' and a-strivin' wid de sperit in de tent' story ob a high buildin'; and a giddy gal projeckin' 'bout couldn't set in her seat like fokes God made, but must' highest shesel' up in de windor sill, cuttin' one eye at de b'ys an' tudder at de preacher, an' lettin' her min' gad 'bout an' so she 'gan ter nod, an' fus' thing everybody know'd she wuz fas' ter sleep, an' los' her balunz, an' tumble plum out'n de tent' story winder down on to der banquet (banquet) underneaf, an' lo an' behole, when de great 'Postle Paul an' de res' ob de breddren git down dar they picked up *twelve baskets ob de fragments!* Dis, my belubed breddren an' sistern, is de awful condishun dem'll fin' deyselvs in w'at take de Lawd's tempul fur a boad'in' house."

CORRESPONDENCE.

CHRISTIANITY AS A BENEFACTOR.

TO THE EDITOR OF THE "FREETHINKER."

SIR,—I looked on Mr. Ball's recent article as a fine piece of irony, but as he is serious in what he said, let us look at a few facts. Take the massacres of the Waldenses and Albigenses, in which neither sex, age nor condition was spared. The country was made a wilderness, and the towns heaps of smoking ruins. Here the less superstitious were destroyed. In Ireland, in 1641, no less than 154,000 Protestants were massacred.¹ Here again the less superstitious were destroyed. Seventy thousand of the most capable and enlightened in France were murdered in 1572. These are only a few instances out of thousands in which the most enlightened were destroyed by the most bigoted and fanatical.² Darwin gives as a reason why Spain has sunk in the scale of nations, and produces so few great men, the Inquisition, which for centuries persecuted and destroyed the most enlightened of the race.³ In every country where Christianity has been rampant nearly the same story can be told, how those who dared to think and express their thoughts have been discouraged, howled down and murdered. Therefore we see that Christianity has not been the means of preserving the fittest,⁴ but rather the most superstitious and bigoted. And to-day, even, Christianity is fighting against the law of the survival of the fittest, for we see the most superstitious and hypocritical helped to propagate their noxious species by it, and the whole tone of society warped and made hypocritical through its agency.⁵ Unlike consumption, which attacks the least fitted to survive, Christianity has destroyed the best, and is still helping to keep alive the worst.⁶ Darwin points out that evolution does not invariably produce progress, but through some causes sometimes takes backward steps. Christianity has been one of the causes which have checked and are interfering with the development of man. Let us remember that before Christianity became paramount, Greek and Roman civilisation had made immense strides, and that it was chiefly owing to Christianity that Europe was again sunk in ignorance and barbarism and worse superstition than ever. Christianity fostered and pampered⁷ superstition, hypocrisy and vice. The priests and nuns who were eliminated by celibacy, asceticism, madness and martyrdom, are hardly worth counting:⁸ it is the effect of their example and teaching on the people at large which must be looked at. Mr. Ball instances the Crusades as weeding out millions of the most credulous and fanatical, but I believe those who stayed at home were equally credulous and fanatical, only not so brave and enterprising as those who gave their lives for what they considered a good cause.⁹ The people were told that the land of their Savior was defiled by the infidels, and Christians persecuted. All the people believed this, and the efficacy of the Church's indulgences; but it was the bravest and most enterprising of them who sacrificed their lives for what they believed. Thus has it ever been with Christianity: destroying the noblest and helping to keep alive cowards and hypocrites. I am sorry that a Freethought champion of Mr. Ball's ability should acknowledge that any good to mankind has evolved out of the "accursed creed."¹⁰ I hope he will think over this matter and change his opinions.—I am, Sir, yours respectfully,

J. E. ROOSE.

A REPLY.

¹ Roman Catholics make the number only 8,000. Mosheim accepts 40,000 as the number, and says that "Cromwell exacted ample vengeance."

² Evolution, as I have already explained, is almost invariably complicated with adverse influences, and depends on the balance of effect, however slight. The arguments advanced by Mr. Roose must be weighed against those I have put forward. We must remember, too, that England being Protestant, we hear much of Roman Catholic atrocities and little of Protestant retaliations. The numerous wars and persecutions injured both sides. Both sides, moreover, extirpated the more violent and credulous fanatics, such as the Anabaptists too often were.

³ I explained how the more religious races thus suffered enormously, though indirectly, through their own pious destruction of the best minds among them.

⁴ I have not maintained that Christianity preserves the fittest, except by slowly but surely eliminating—directly or indirectly, individually or nationally or racially—the more superstitious and bigoted of individuals and nations.

⁵ This is in the long run a suicidal process for religion and the religious tendency. Religion becomes contemptible and perishes of moral decay.

⁶ And *vice versa* also.

⁷ I regard Christianity as a product of the superstitious tendency, and as springing from religious credulity and ultimately weeding it out.

⁸ This is a very wild assertion. Anyone who wishes to treat the matter in a scientific and unbiassed spirit must allow that the elimination of vast numbers of the most religious or credulous, generation after generation, would seriously weaken the superstitious tendency in the race. The effect of superficial teaching would not ultimately counterbalance the continued constitu-

tional evolution of the race in the other direction by artificial selection.

⁹ The more fanatical were raised above fear by their delusion. It is absurd to suppose that religious belief did not tend powerfully in the direction of sending its victims on religious errands. So far as it was the brave believers who were exterminated, so far the surviving believers would be more cowardly, and the character and influence of these cowards and their religion would be degraded and weakened.

¹⁰ I think it only simple justice and truth to acknowledge not only certain good effects of the discreditable yet ultimately beneficial work unwittingly accomplished by Christianity, but many other works of which the moralist and humanitarian can heartily approve. The "Freethought" which would win by blind injustice I would condemn as strongly as I do Christianity. In the present case my compliment to Christianity is so exceeding back-handed and sarcastic that no Freethinker need object to it as yielding anything to the enemy. Classing Christianity with death, famine, war and vice, as one of the means of evolution, is no concession, but, on the contrary, a severe condemnation. The philosophy of the matter is but the general philosophy of evil, which by its fundamental characteristic is necessarily self-destructive or suicidal in its tendency. "Out of evil cometh good" is a saying strikingly illustrated in the action of the Darwinian law of evolution. The evils of the struggle for existence have resulted in the evolution of mankind from savagery and from the lower forms of life.

W. B. BALL.

"THE CONFSSIONAL"

TO THE EDITOR OF THE "FREETHINKER."

SIR,—In your notice of my little work, "The Confessional, Roman and Anglican," you express regret "that the exposure is mainly founded on 'The Priest in Absolution,' a work long since withdrawn from circulation." In the ordinary sense of the word, the work never was in "circulation"; it bore on its title, "Privately printed for the use of the clergy." I do not pretend that it is the *circulation* of the book from which pernicious effects result, but from its forming, openly or clandestinely, a text-book for the priest, to guide him, among our wives and sisters, in the exercise of his inquisitorial prurience. I have by me a full translation of the extracts from Dens and Liguori; but I am convinced that the indiscriminate publication of such a translation would be far from an unmixed good.—Yours truly,

SALADIN.

REVIEWS.

The Republican. January. STANDING.—The editorial notes form the best item. Mr. Standing continues his "History of the Aristocracy." Why is Campbell's "Men of England" slightly altered and printed without a name?

A System of Hygienic Medicine, the only Rational way of Treating Disease. By T. R. ALLINSON, L.R.C.P., Physician and Surgeon. London: Pitman.—A sensible little book, full of sound instruction and wise counsel. Dr. Allinson is honest enough to warn people against physic; he advises them to live in healthy conditions, and tells them how to do it, and to trust Nature for all the rest. Freethinkers would do well to read this volume.

A Summary of Irish Grievances. By EDMUND HARVEY. The Grange, Waterford, Ireland. Price One Penny.—A good plain statement, which Englishmen would do well to read. We cannot, however, agree with the author that Irish Catholics suffer a grievous injury by not being allowed to make their public education religious; nor can we allow his contention that Irish Catholics have never shown a disposition to retaliate on the Protestants. Mr. Harvey's remarks on Home Rule are just and pertinent. We believe with him that if a fair compromise be not made now the end will be complete separation.

ONE of the hotels in Grand Rapids gives its guests solid reading by chaining Bibles alongside the washstands in each room. This is probably on the principle that cleanliness is next to Godliness. But, to show how some of the seed falls on stony ground, a commercial traveller wrote in bold letters on the title page, ungrammatically, but, as he thought, truthfully: "Less Bibles and better beds would be a better thing for the helpless guests."

A HIGHLAND SERMON.—Scotch Highlanders have the habit when talking their English of interspersing the personal pronoun "he" when not required, as in "The king he has come." Often in consequence a sentence is rendered extremely ludicrous. A gentleman says he lately listened to the Rev. Mr. —, who began his discourse thus: "My friends, you will find my text in the first epistle general of Peter, fifth chapter and eighth verse, 'The devil he goeth about like a roaring lion seeking whom he may devour.' Now, my brethren, for our instruction I have divided my text into four heads. Firstly, we shall endeavor to ascertain who the devil he was? Secondly, we shall inquire into his geographical position—namely, where the devil he was going? Thirdly, who the devil he was seeking? And fourthly and lastly, we shall endeavor to solve a question which has never yet been solved, what the devil he was 'roaring about.'"

PROFANE JOKES.

AN Indianapolis minister wrote a communication to the *Times* of that city, headed "Vote as You Pray." Had this advice been followed, every Christian voter would have been in a minority of one.

A LADY undertook to teach her little boy the Lord's Prayer. He got along very well until he came to the words, "Give us this day our daily bread," then he paused for awhile, and at last asked: "God knows everything, doesn't he, ma?" "Yes, my son." "Then it's no use trying to fool him by asking him to give us our daily bread. He knows that the baker brings us bread every morning."

ANOTHER TEN WANTED.—At a meeting in London to receive a report from missionaries sent to recover the tribes of Israel, a certain nobleman was asked to take the chair. "I take," he replied, "a very great interest in your researches, gentlemen. The fact is, I have borrowed money from all tribes at the East and West End; if you can find a new set I shall feel very much obliged."

"DON'T you want to go to the better world, Tommy?" asked a Sunday School teacher of the new scholar. "No, mum," promptly replied the frank little fellow. "And why not, Tommy?" "Oh, when I die I want to go where a feller can rest." "Well, my boy, you can rest there." "Well, in that song we sung it said we'd all shine there." "Certainly; don't you want to shine there?" "No, mum, I don't want to shine there. I get enough of that here. I'm a bootblack, mum!"

MR. HUBBARD last year presented a petition from the Young Men's Christian Association to the House of Commons praying for the better protection of girls and young women. There were several ways in which the presentator could have passed it to the proper official in silence, but he arose and without a break or pause repeated as follows: "Mr. Speaker, I beg to present a petition for the better protection of girls and young women from the members of the Young Men's Christian Association."

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