

THE FREETHINKER

EDITED BY G. W. FOOTE.

Sub-Editor—J. M. WHEELER.

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[PRICE ONE PENNY.



GODLY AND GODLESS.

Numerous cases are recorded of Christian parents cutting their children's throats, or otherwise killing their offspring, as a sacrifice to the Lord. From the days of Abraham, who offered his son Isaac, such crimes have been committed as acts of faith, well-pleasing to the Father, who himself gloried in the sacrifice of his only begotten Son. Believers like Abraham and Jephthah go to heaven. Faithful dogs who rescue children from drowning, or lose their lives in defence of their beloved masters, of course have no paradise provided for them in the Christian scheme. The noblest faithfulness or most splendid devotion is godless and merits no reward. But the pious crimes of godly Christians will be followed by eternal bliss to the perpetrators.

THE WAX NOSE.

MARTIN LUTHER, who spoke many a truth in forcible and often rough language, called the Bible a nose of wax, which people twisted into any shape that pleased them. The stout Reformer was himself a living proof of the truth of his simile, for he dealt pretty freely with Holy Writ, discarding the Book of Revelation and calling the letter of St. James an epistle of straw. But the pliability of the Bible in Luther's age was as nothing to its pliability in our generation. The more sagacious and dexterous clergy, who are bent on keeping the Bible and accommodating its interpretation to the disclosures of history and science, are capable of finding in it everything they need, and of reading out of it everything objectionable. Texts that were formerly interpreted in one way are now interpreted in another; and doctrines which men were burnt alive for disputing are now declared to have been misconceptions.

Mr. Spurgeon has seceded from the Baptist Union on account of its laxity of belief, and although he simply

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desires that the Union should formulate a few "evangelical principles" from Scripture, his late colleagues prefer to lose his company rather than comply with his request. "Advanced" Nonconformists, like the Rev. E. White, in order to get rid of eternal damnation, are preaching the doctrine of conditional immortality; according to which the elect will receive a free ticket for heaven, while all the rest will be annihilated and forgotten. There are several sympathisers with this doctrine in the Church of England, but a still more influential section of the Establishment supports the view of Archdeacon Farrar. This dexterous blender of old and new thinks nothing of rendering one Greek word in two different ways in the very same verse, so that it means everlasting in relation to heaven and only a good while in relation to hell. Nor is the Roman Catholic Church slow to follow the lead of its rivals. Without the slightest ecclesiastical censure, Mr. St. George Mivart claims that his Church retains her ancient power to interpret the Bible as she pleases; and if she now declares that Adam and Eve are fictions, that Abraham, Isaac and Jacob are mythical figures, that the Bible contains absurdities, contradictions, and immoralities, and that nine-tenths of it was written by fallible men, God knows when and where; nobody has a

right to complain, and all are obliged to submit with filial reverence to the dictum of Holy Mother Church.

We could multiply instances, but we prefer to take a very recent case at Northampton, where the Mayor and Corporation went in state to All Saints' Church, and listened to a sermon by the vicar. The Rev. R. B. Hull appears to be highly gifted with that quality which is sometimes called assurance, but more frequently "cheek." He began by speaking of the childish, antique notion of a primitive Golden Age, followed by a Silver Age, and then by an Iron Age. According to this conception, the human race began well, but gradually went from bad to worse. "This," said Mr. Hull, "was a history of the human race as our forefathers fancied it. But when we come to the light given to us by history, by the Bible, and by the science of geology, we find an altogether different tale." Mr. Hull then indulges in a panegyric on Darwin, and pretends that Genesis and Evolution are exactly alike; nay, it seems to be his opinion that if we had understood Moses properly there would have been no necessity for Darwin. True, the Bible tells us of Adam and Eve, of Paradise, and of a Fall; but Mr. Hull escapes from this difficulty in the airiest manner by pretending that our notions of that business are mainly derived from Milton. As a matter of fact, says Mr. Hull, Adam and Eve were represented as being in a low condition; they wore no clothes and did not distinguish between right and wrong. We judge, therefore, that Mr. Hull discards the doctrine of the Fall, which he has solemnly undertaken to preach. Yet even this shuffling will not save him, for according to Darwinism Adam and Eve never existed at all, and it is useless to discuss the condition of non-entities.

Mr. Hull remarks, with an air of triumph, that there is not a word about the Fall in the Psalms of David. But does he mean to pit the Psalms against Genesis, and to deny the truth of one part of the Bible if it is not corroborated by every other part? Mr. Hull ought to know that the Genesiac mythology was adopted by the Jews at a late period of their history, although it is put first in Scripture. To say, therefore, it is not mentioned in the Psalms, is simply to say it was not mentioned before it was known.

Even in the New Testament, says Mr. Hull, the Fall is only mentioned by St. Paul, and by him only four times. Are we, then, to assume that Paul was not to be trusted unless he made *five* affidavits? Surely if Mr. Hull can reject a doctrine which is distinctly and emphatically affirmed "four times" by the principal writer in the New Testament, he need not quarrel with those who reject the authority of *every* writer in the Bible, and trust to their own knowledge and common sense. Let Mr. Hull continue in this vein, and we shall find him disputing some orthodox tenet on the ground that it is only mentioned once by Jesus Christ.

After pulling about the great wax nose, Mr. Hull "spoke eloquently on the advantages of a Christian education." Yes, it has many advantages. It enables you to take pay for one doctrine and to preach another; to play fast and loose with Scripture and reason for a good living; and in a commercial age such advantages cannot be rated too high.

G. W. FOOTE.

CATHOLICISM IN ENGLAND.

THE Roman Catholics boast of a notable increase in their membership and institutions in this country during the present reign. According to their own account, since 1850 their bishops have increased from 8 to 17, their priests from 826 to 2,314, their churches from 597 to 1,304, their religious houses from 17 to 587, their school children from 24,000 to 280,000. The Scottish increase has been quite as marked, and there are now in that country 6 Roman Catholic archbishops and bishops, 334 priests, and 327 churches, chapels, and stations, and 46 religious houses. The total number of Roman Catholics in England and Wales is 1,354,000, and in Scotland 326,000.

Do these figures present any cause of alarm to those who consider the Catholic Church the great bulwark of all that opposes freedom and progress? We think not, for the following reasons. The great bulk of the Catholic

population consists of Irish immigrants and their descendants. According to the census of 1881, there were domiciled in Great Britain no fewer than 781,119 persons stating themselves to have been born in Ireland. To these must be added the children born of Irish parents (usually married early and notably prolific) ever since, at least, the time of the Irish Famine. These can hardly be fewer than a quarter of a million more. The ratio of Catholics in Ireland to the rest of the population is 78 per cent., but the immigration has been almost exclusively of Catholics, so that we can safely compute that over 80 per cent. of the Irish element in Great Britain are Catholics.

Probably over a million of the Catholic population are due to Irish immigration. Of the rest a considerable number must represent the old English Catholic families. Proselytism, if not at a standstill, seems at any rate to be counter-balanced in point of numbers, by the "leakage" from the Church of the children of mixed marriages, and from other causes. No doubt in the middle of the present century there was a great wave of proselytism when Newman, Manning, Oxenham, Dalgairns, Ward, Faber, and many other eminent men went over to Rome. There has been kept up a very active and unscrupulous Roman propaganda; but the harvest is no longer plentiful, though the laborers are far from few. The proportion of Roman Catholic marriages to the rest of the population, which, in the absence of a religious census is the best means of calculation, is decreasing, while the proportion of civil marriages is, happily, on the increase. From the point of view of the oft spoken of "Conversion of England," there can be little doubt that the last Pope and Ecumenical Council made a great mistake in propounding the dogma of Papal Infallibility. The English Church is becoming more Ritualistic, the Romish dogmas of the mass, of Mariolatry and of confession to priests, are spreading among High Churchmen, but the dogma of Papal infallibility is found too bitter a pill for them to swallow. They stumble at the infallibility of a living interpreter, while accepting the infallibility of a collection of musty old documents.

What, then, is the meaning of the great increase of plant of which we spoke at the outset? No doubt, as a writer in the *Quarterly Review* points out, it is partly speculation, analogous to the palatial offices of some company which is trying to procure business, and knows it must seem to be prosperous before it can begin to be so. In the first place, the Church has had to provide for the Irish immigration. Then its converts for the most part have been recruited from the wealthy, who are naturally anxious to induce others to join them, and who contribute largely for that purpose.

In this respect the Freethought cause, which is the only consistent and direct antagonist to Catholicism, compares very unfavorably. On the other hand, Freethought gains the *élite* of the working class while Catholicism succeeds only with a few of the so-called nobility, in whom its very absence of reason seems to be an attraction, and with the almost totally uneducated. Both causes alike find powerful support in the press; but the best Catholic writers, like St. George Mivart and W. L. Lilly, are more than over-matched by Huxley, Spencer and Harrison, while the crowd of Irish journalists, who are not always sound in the faith, are fully equalled by the journalists who are more or less imbued with Freethought. As far as general literature is concerned, the Roman Catholics are extremely deficient. Their leading publishers are reported as saying that the Roman Catholic reading public of London consists of no more than six hundred persons. Freethought can much more than compete with them on this ground.

The Romanists, regarding themselves as the legitimate heirs of the ancient English Church, look forward to the Disestablishment of the Church of England with sanguine expectations of benefit. But they do not wish it to come before they can take advantage of it. No doubt in the event of Disestablishment, the Romanising element in the Anglican Church would seek shelter in the Romish Church, where their ideas of sacerdotal supremacy are most consistently realised. On the other hand the rationalising section might be expected to become more pronounced in their repudiation of the dogmas.

We have said we see no cause for alarm in the often talked of spread of Popery in England. The writer of the very careful article in the *Quarterly Review* says:

"On the broadest survey of the situation the fact is simply that, fifty years ago Roman Catholics constituted nearly one-

third of the population of the United Kingdom, and now are reduced to one-seventh. Of course this is almost entirely due to the great diminution of the population of Ireland, which has continued to go back since 1846, but it is none the less decisive of the general issue."

It would seem to be America, rather than England that will be troubled with the racial problem connected with Roman Catholicism. We have no fear that with her free schools and free institutions she will not be able to hold her own against the influx of sacerdotalism and superstition. Indeed the Catholics themselves may be expected to exhibit, like Dr. McGlynn, some sense of the incompatibility of the claims of Rome with a democratic régime.

There is one point of the utmost importance in connection with the question, and that is that while the Freethinking population is voluntarily restraining its numbers, the Catholic Church is unceasingly urging its followers to increase and multiply. But a consideration of the many issues of the population question cannot be dealt with at the end of a short article like the present.

J. M. WHEELER.

ACID DROPS.

THE Rev. W. Adamson, of The Vicarage, Old Ford, E., is soliciting signatures to a protest against her Majesty's dealings with the Pope. He reminds the Queen of her Coronation oath and of the statute under which the "people of these Realms are absolved from their allegiance" if the Sovereign should hold communion with the Church of Rome.

MADAME CORSYN, aged sixty, walked from Lille to Rome to be present at the Pope's Jubilee. An additional pilgrimage to the Shrine of Loretto so fatigued her that she had to enter an hospital in Rome. She thinks, of course, that this foolish walking is all on the road to heaven.

THE *Rock* laments that we only employ about 3,500 missionaries to carry the message of damnation and salvation to the heathen, while we employ 500,000 people in simply amusing us in various ways. The *Rock* forgets that rational amusement is infinitely better than a demoralising swindle. If Christianity had only amused the world instead of deluding and depraving it, Christianity would have deserved far lighter condemnation than it now merits.

THE split in the Baptist camp shows no signs of healing. The Baptist Union Council having formally accepted Mr. Spurgeon's resignation and passed a resolution condemning his action, he replies that he does not care in the least about the censure passed on him by the Council. He explains that he brings no charges of unorthodoxy against any particular Baptists, because he would thereby expose himself to threatened law suits. The constitution of the Baptist Union contains no doctrinal basis except the belief that immersion is the only true baptism, so that he could not legally prove unorthodoxy except on this one point. No Baptist can be heterodox unless he forswears his baptism. It is evident that the liberalising tendency is strong enough to hold its ground, in spite of all the personal influences of Spurgeon in favor of staying the tide of progress, which flows in the direction of softening, and finally indeed of abolishing, the great superstition of the age.

THE tithe-war in North Wales is still progressing. The expedition for appraising articles seized, was watched by a large and angry crowd armed with thick hedge-sticks, and it was only by the tact of the managers of the anti-tithe movement that a dangerous conflict was averted. At one farm two pigs were carried off in a sack. At another an effigy of a clergyman in black was found hung by a cord over a haystack. Another effigy, representing the vicar of Cym, was clad in a dirty nightshirt to imitate a surplice. The crowd carried this with them, and at the conclusion of the proceedings they beat their representative vicar into shreds with their heavy sticks and kicked him about the place, yelling and hooting. This shows how popular the Church is making itself by seizing the produce of men's toil.

THE agitation against tithes is also spreading across the Welsh border into Cheshire. The Ecclesiastical Commissioners have had to send bailiffs to effect a distraint upon a chapel at Seacombe, whose trustees refuse to pay tithes for the land on which the building stands. The bailiffs carried off the chapel harmonium. Thus one set of Christians plunders another, all in the name of peace and good will, of course. Who says that Christianity doesn't make people just and considerate towards each other?

THE last return in regard to tithes, made up for the year ending June 30, 1887, shows the amount taken in this form to be £4,054,405 8s. 7½d. On looking at the details we find that Wales has a good deal to complain of, since the tithes from many of her parishes come to England. The Bishop of Lichfield, for

instance, takes the whole of the tithes of Pemal (£223) Tallyly (£230), and Towyn (£793). The Dean and Chapter of Windsor take the whole of the tithes of Trevecca (£504), and the whole of Abergwili (£709), and of several other parishes.

A clergyman, writing in a religious newspaper, declares his belief that if only the Pope, the Archbishop of Canterbury, Mr. Spurgeon, and the president of the Wesleyan Conference could be shut up on bread and water till they had agreed upon a definition of theological terms, the reunion of Christendom would be accomplished in less than a century. We think it more likely that the story of the Kilkenny cats would receive a fresh illustration. We should much like to see the experiment tried.

HERR COHEN says the Jews are falling away from the old traditions to such an extent that there are actually Jewish proprietors of large pork and bacon establishments. He says the best protection in the East against pickpockets and petty thefts, is to be known to carry a piece of pork or bacon. This says little for religions which seem to include all the thieves, and which only induce honesty in particular cases where pious prejudices interfere with the otherwise unchecked propensity for picking and stealing.

MARGARET ANNIE PRICE has been committed for trial at Bolton on a charge of obtaining large sums of money by false pretences. When doubts were expressed by her victims, she wrote in a religious strain, and told them to cast their doubts on Jesus. It is not surprising to learn that pious Maggie spent all her money in extravagant pleasures.

SPIRITUALISM naturally flourishes while its professors can draw ample supplies of cash from credulous dupes. Mrs. Berger, daughter of the late Commodore Vanderbilt, has been gradually swindled out of a fortune by mediums, who pretended to show her the ghost of her dead boy. A little girl has confessed that she was employed to personate the deceased son of Mrs. Berger, and it now transpires that the poor lady has frequently paid as much as £200 at a time for a *séance*! We wonder how much early Christianity flourished by similar attacks on the purses of its victims. The Bible itself records that the apostles persuaded their dupes to sell their lands and houses and give them the proceeds. The devices which Christianity employed were terrorism in threatening the speedy end of the world by fire, and the hope of escape to heaven by help of the Jerusalem ghost who had proceeded thither as pioneer.

THE *Echo* reports that a clergyman has been caught cutting volumes in the library of the British Museum and secreting the cuttings. On being challenged by one of the detectives he denied the charge, although when taken before the authorities he admitted the offence and produced the cuttings. He was expelled and his ticket cancelled.

ON the ocean it is considered very unlucky by sailors not merely to have sailed on a Friday, but to drown a cat or to carry a clergyman on board. A bishop amongst the passengers is a terribly bad omen. I once was caught in the Red Sea in a terrible storm of thunder, lightning and rain. Presently I spoke to a sailor. "Very strange this, quartermaster," I said, "such rain here, of all places in the world?" "Yes, sir," he replied, "it is strange; but I ain't astonished at nothin' this 'ere voyage, seein' as how our head steward drowned a cat just afore we histed the anchor at Gravesend; and we've got six sky pilots (clergymen), and five 'Devil dodgers' (dissenting ministers, who were missionaries) abroad. Can't expect no luck a voyage like this," he said, as he turned away in despair.—*Echo*.

MR. PARRETT, being summoned as a juror to the Court of Queen's Bench, was detained in court, although pronounced incompetent to act as a juror on account of his want of religious belief. The judge refused to let him go on the ground that if he excused him so many jurors would claim exemption that the business of the court would be seriously impeded. Is it not time that this insult to Freethought was done away with? Every protest and every case of honest avowal of Freethought opinion will help to abolish the invidious distinction the more speedily.

AT Rutland, Vermont, Wm. Shelby, a Salvation Army crank, and a book-convasser, became suddenly insane. He stabbed his seven-year-old daughter in the back with a jack-knife; and, in a tussel with his ten-year-old son, he trampled on her head, inflicting some bad bruises. Then he rushed bare-headed into the street with a valise full of books, and began reading and praying. He was arrested and manacled by a policeman after a hard struggle.

THE English Church Union, meeting at Oxford under the presidency of Lord Halifax, has resolved "to protect for the children of the poor their right to the definite teaching of the Church." Would it not be more useful to protect the children of the poor against the spoliation of the privileged classes? Let the poor have a decent time of it in this world, and they will be able to take as good care of themselves as parsons in the next world—if ever they get there.

THE *Boston Post* says that Governor Taylor, of Tennessee, recently told of a colored clergyman who preached a sermon on the text: "And the multitudes came to him, and he healed them of divers diseases." Said he: "My dying congregation, this is a terrible text. Disease is in the world. The smallpox slays its hundreds, the cholera its thousands, and the yellow fever its tens of thousands; but, in the language of the text, if you take the divers, you are gone. These earthly doctors can cure the smallpox, cholera, and yellow fever if they get there in time, but nobody but the good Lord can cure the divers."

THE Archbishop of York's special prayers against small-pox were recited in all the Sheffield churches last Sunday; so small-pox has received its death-blow. But if such prayers are efficacious, why trouble about vaccination too? And why not pray for the total abolition of small-pox all over the world while one is about it?

NOR content with beseeching the Almighty to send the small-pox out of Sheffield, wherever else it may go. Archdeacon Blakeney urged from the pulpit the duty of re-vaccination, a medical nostrum which he probably takes on trust like the Thirty-nine Articles. The Archdeacon doesn't reflect that if the medical nostrum is efficacious, the prayers of the priest are unnecessary, and *vice versa*. Hadn't the parsons and the doctors better settle among themselves which remedy we should trust to? They can hardly expect us to pay for *two* infallible remedies at the same time for the same disease.

THE Sheffield epidemic is a capital illustration of what happens when people trust to a professional nostrum, whether clerical or medical. There is an implicit belief in its efficacy, all sensible precautions are neglected, and faith and filth keep up their immemorial alliance.

WM. SCOTT CAMPBELL was a reputable merchant of Johnstown, N.Y., whose chief, if not only, failing was an irascible temper. Squire Frothingham of the same town had a satirical turn of mind. The merchant died, and a fine monument was erected to his memory, surmounted with a cross. Some friends of Squire Frothingham, in a playful mood asked him if he could not compose an appropriate epitaph. The squire closed his diminutive eyes, and improvised as follows:

"W. S. Campbell he died, he did,
And here is erected a pyramid
With a cross above, intended to show
That the cross old cuss lies buried below."

AMONG the travellers who testify to the superior moral qualities of the Mohammedans to the eastern Christians, is Sir Henry Layard, the discoverer of Nineveh. In his recently published account of his early adventures in Persia and Babylonia, he speaks highly of native hospitality and kindness, though he often met with roving bands of robbers. He attributes the general decency and civilised character of the city of Shuster to the fact that "there were no Christians, and consequently no grog-shops."

IN the same work Sir Henry Layard gives a rich extract from the log-book of the vessel in which he sailed from Baghdad. Near Basra arose one of those violent tornadoes which occasionally sweep over this part. The vessel was in great danger. After the storm was over, the quartermaster thus recorded the event: "The windy and watery elements raged, Tears and prayers was had recourse to, but was of no manner of use. So we hauled up the anchor and got round the point."

THE Lambeth Progressive Club for Secularists and Radicals, having just been re-organised, advertised for a caretaker, and received an application from a very pious Scripture reader, whose grammar and spelling would have done credit to General Peter's or General Booth's Salvation Army. The applicant trusts in God for procuring the place, but does not refer to him for the necessary security.

SOMEBODY advertises for "A young man to look after a horse of the Methodist persuasion!" Read "donkey" for "horse," and the paragraph is a little more truthful.

THE Rev. R. B. Hull, vicar of All Saints, Northampton, bewails the fact that twenty-six thousand children in Birmingham are brought up with "only such religious education as may be got at home." He relates that one boy who was asked, "Who was the mother of our Lord?" answered "Was it the Queen?" Another lad when spoken to about Jesus Christ asked, "Who was the gentleman?" Mr. Hull considers this "a terrible state of things." No doubt it is from the pulpit point of view, but from our point of view it is simply funny.

SITTING one Sunday in the Bible class, says a Christian writer, during a pause in the conversation, there suddenly floated down to me from the infant class in the gallery, the following text, as it was being recited by an exceedingly diminutive scrap of a boy: "Not for our *shins* alone, but for the *shins* of the whole world."

CARDINAL MANNING, preaching at Westminster, is reported to have said that "there are those who have received absolution in the Sacrament of Penance, who have received the precious body and blood of our Lord Jesus Christ in the Holy Communion; and yet these are living the life of Cain—nay, I will say of Judas." Much good does the precious body, blood, etc., do them.

THE Bath Guildhall was recently the scene of a pretty little quarrel between the local Protestant Alliance and the Church of England Working Men's Society. Mr. Powell, the secretary of the latter body, had been lecturing in Bath, and a Mr. Walsh was brought down from London to prove that Mr. Powell's Society is a Romanising confederacy. Mr. Walsh was called a liar and blasphemer and other complimentary names, and the meeting eventually broke up into angry groups that seemed to invite the attention of the police. How these Christians love one another!

AN Irish idiot at Kingstown objects to a public reception of Mr. John Morley, because that gentleman is a Freethinker who wishes to make other people so, and if he succeeded we should see a repetition of the horrid crimes of the French Revolution. No doubt Mr. Morley will laugh at this nonsense, but the condition of that Irish idiot is anything but a joke. His friends should look after him.

CAPTAIN ADCOCK gave £20 for some Jubilee Alms-houses at Melton Mowbray, but the Charity Commissioners refused to allow Dr. Collis, the vicar, to carry out the project. Captain Adcock therefore requested the return of his money, which he received from the vicar with these words, "Thy money perish with thee." This is a scriptural equivalent to a very common oath affecting people's eyes.

A TERRIBLE tragedy is reported from Beaufort, near Killarney. The family of a farmer, named Doyle, believed in the presence of evil spirits in the household, and Mrs. Doyle became possessed of the hallucination that so long as her idiot son lived the household would be subjected to dreadful misfortunes. Accordingly she killed him with a hatchet, and felt better immediately afterwards. She stated that she had been to heaven and had seen several of its inhabitants. Her eldest son stated that he also had been to heaven's gate, but was not admitted. When arrested the whole family became raving mad. The mother, three daughters, and the son, have been sent to a lunatic asylum, while the father is still under remand.

AT Macon, the other Sunday, one of the finest looking men connected with the Executive Department of the City Government, was leaning up against a corner, when he was accosted by a well-dressed stranger, who was accompanied by a lady. "Can you tell me, sir, if there is an Episcopal Church near her?" "Yes, sir, Christ Church, just around the corner." "Is it high church or low?" "Well, it's moderately high, but not so high as the First Baptist." "You mistake me. I mean is it high or low church doctrines?" "Well, I can't say. You might try St. Paul's; it's higher up on the hill, but all our churches are one storey. Then there's St. Barnabas—" "Oh you misunderstand me. Do they hold to high or low principles?" "I'm hanged if I know! Go up to the hall and ask the Colonel. He can give you all the information you want. I expect if you were to see Punch Blue he could tell you, he's up in all that sort of business," and then the officer rapped upon the brick pavement for his partner, and passed on down the street scratching his puzzled head for a solution of the problem.

HENRY VARLEY, *père*, ex-pork butcher and evangelist, has called again at the Cape of Good Hope, on his way to Australia. The *Cape Argus* supplies its readers with his portrait, at the risk, as it says, of having fire and brimstone on the heads of the artist and writer. Well will it be if the disaster is limited to these, as it is understood that Henry Varley *père* has the run of Providential vengeance, sudden deaths, earthquakes and so on, and can turn on a volcano, or "something with boiling oil in it," as a missionary once described the infernal regions, for the spiritual improvement of any persons so misguided as not to take him at his own valuation. It is well known that he alone prevented Mr. Bradlaugh from getting into Parliament, and suppressed the *Freethinker*.

UNDETERRED by these awful examples, the *Cape Argus* ventures a few caustic remarks on the itinerant revivalist who is carrying his one lecture "To men only" to the other side of the world. It says, in allusion to his former profession—"To most men it will appear lamentable that anyone should leave a business in which an honest man may render inestimable service to the public in supplying it with pure food from one year's end to the other, in order to go about making people needlessly unhappy by telling them that they are on the road to eternal fiery torment. It is a year and a half since Mr. Varley's last preaching season. It would be an interesting subject of inquiry to Mr. Varley as well as to his critics how much the better we are for his former visit. The threatened victims of his denunciations are certainly none the worse."

MR. FOOTE'S LECTURES.

Sunday, Feb. 5, Secular Hall, 61 New Church Road, Camberwell; at 7.30, "Darwin on God."

FEB. 12, Milton Hall, London; 19, Liverpool; 26, Rochdale.
MARCH 4 & 11, Hall of Science, London; 18, Leeds; 25, Milton Hall, London.
APRIL 1, Manchester; 8, Plymouth; 15, Huddersfield.
MAY 13 and 27, Hall of Science, London.

TO 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. 3d.; 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.

H. ROBERTS.—Pleased to hear you were delighted with our last Sketch, and that you have taken extra copies for distribution. Your definition of Atheism from Matthews's *Diary of an Invalid* is good, but not perfect. As you have been kind enough to send it we print it here:—"The Atheist indeed neither affirms nor denies; but suggests that the existence of a Deity is an arbitrary hypothesis, to account for the phenomena of the universe." The tract you send us is excellent.

JONES.—Your letter is dated from Amwell, but we fancy you must mean Hanwell, for you are unintelligible.

A. LEWIS.—Cuttings received with thanks.

A. SAULT.—Always glad to receive your cuttings.

J. CHAMBERLAIN.—Hone's Apocryphal New Testament can be obtained of Mr. Forder for 3s. post free.

W. H. SPIVAKY.—The date is booked.

CASABIANCA.—Thanks for the cutting.

J. RUTHERFORD.—Much obliged. Another reader had sent us the *Sunderland Echo* which contains a fuller report.

R. REED reports that the *Freethinker* can be obtained of Bow, newsagent, 3 Francis Terrace, Crownfield Road, Stratford, who exhibits it in his window.

ALCHEM.—Thanks, but newspaper cuttings dated November are rather ancient. Pleased to hear that Freethought literature is well distributed in your neighborhood. Grant Allen's articles in the *Pall Mall Gazette* we reserve for a special use.

CONSTANT READER.—Such cuttings are always welcome and of great assistance.

R. S.—The joke you refer to in the *Freethinker* for Oct. 6. has just been utilised by *Punch* for a half-page illustration, but we did not originate it; it was a clipping from somewhere, probably from an American paper.

G. NAEWIGER thanks the friends who sent him Freethought literature for distribution, and reports that some of the Hull people have been so startled that their hair curls like a negroe's

G. WEIR.—Sorry to hear the bigots have jockeyed you out of your shop, but trust you will be able to secure another in a good position. Mr. Foote will be happy to represent the Edinburgh Branch in a public discussion with any competent representative of the Christian party. Probably the champions of Jesus will fight shy of a set debate; you had, therefore, better get all possible advantage out of the present course of lectures.

R. SHAW.—We have read the reverend gentleman's letter and returned it to you. We will gladly give him space to reply to our criticism.

FRIEND.—Thanks for the jokes. Cardinal Manning is a born ecclesiastic, and doubtless the prospects of the soul of Prince Charles Edward Stuart are a small matter compared with the favor of the present English sovereign.

PAPERS RECEIVED.—*Echo*—*Jus*—*Star*—*Glasgow Weekly Citizen*—*Western Figaro*—*Freidenker*—*American Idea*—*Lucifer*—*New York World*—*Liberty*—*Menschentum*—*L'Union des Libres-Penseurs*—*Free Lance*—*Wakefield Express*—*Leeds Evening Express*—*Brighton Times*—*Sunderland Echo*—*Le Journal du Peuple*—*L'Union Democratique*—*Cape Argus Weekly*.

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

SUGAR PLUMS.

BLACKBURN returns two members of "the stupid party" to Parliament and is of course a very pious town. Mr. Foote's audiences last Sunday in the Lyceum Theatre were therefore not so large as they would have been in any other town of the same size. But they were larger than might have been expected, and the lectures evidently made a deep impression. A few Freethinkers came over from Darwen and other places in the district, and at least one enthusiast walked eight miles to hear the morning lecture. The Blackburn Branch has a very uphill fight, but it is a courageous little band of men and women, and if it keeps on fighting for the good cause it will stir up the sluggish piety of the town and achieve a real success.

WE call our London readers' attention to the letter, which will be found in another column, from the officers of the new Secular Federation. A copy of this letter has also been sent to the *National Reformer*. The Federation should be supported generously, and we appeal to all who have the interests of the Freethought cause at heart to give a ready response to this appeal.

THE National Sunday League held its twentieth annual *soirée* last Monday at the Cannon Street Hotel. There was a large gathering.

THE *Sunderland Echo* gives a fair report of the Secular funeral of Mrs. Elizabeth Weightman, whose remains were followed to the Bishopwearmouth cemetery by a long procession of Freethinkers. At the grave Mr. Austin Holyoake's burial service was impressively read by Mr. S. Pearson. The *Echo* remarks that "the proceedings throughout were of a nature thoroughly befitting the solemn occasion."

IT is related of Lalande, the astronomer, that being in conversation with the Pope, for whom he superintended the Papal observatory, he professed himself a "Christian Atheist," saying that his observation of nature made him an Atheist, but his observation of men made him a Christian. Something like Lalande appears to be the Rev. Perry Marshall, who, in the *Independent Pulpit*, of Texas, contributes a curious article advocating "Religion with Disbelief in Immortality." Mr. Marshall seems to be a Christian Materialist. We have already Christian Agnostics, and any amount of Infidel Christians. Perhaps Mr. Marshall's position is very similar to that of Professor F. W. Newman, who believes in God, but has no belief in life after death.

IN America there are many Spiritualists who, like Hudson Tuttle, believe in immortality, but do not believe in God. Mr. St. George Stock and George Barlow have put forward similar views here. Madame B avatsky, Mr. A. P. Sinnett, and the more philosophical of the Theosophists do not believe in a personal God, although they hold that there is a future existence, at any rate for some of us. Where all is speculation there is opportunity for some curious combinations of opinion.

A CHINESE General in Paris asserts that the Chinese are not Atheists, and in proof of this he states that the word "Atheist" does not exist in the Chinese language. Is not this rather a proof that the Chinese are not really Theists, and hence had no word for the negation of views that they did not hold? The General says that God and heaven are synonymous terms among the Chinese. Does not this show that the Chinese notions on such subjects are vague, and that belief in a personal God as distinguished from Nature and Destiny, had not recommended itself to the minds at least of the learned? Where Theists exist the term Atheist will be evolved as a logical necessity.

THE highest court in France has finally decided that a priest can marry, in spite of the prohibition of the canon law laid down by the Church. No mayor in France can now refuse to celebrate a civil marriage of a priest. The Church, of course, will consider this a detestable piece of persecution and a deadly insult. She cannot endure the legal assurance of liberty and equality to her slaves and ministers. It endangers the supremacy which she has partly gained by insisting on the undivided devotion of a celibate priesthood.

A "WOMAN'S Freethought Educational Union" has been started in America. Mrs. Maggie L. House of Naseville, Missouri, is president, and Mrs. L. H. Greely, of Liberal, Missouri, secretary.

L'Union Democratique reports an interesting oration by M. Victor Bazin on the desirability of substituting a new Republican Calendar in place of the Gregorian one. We understand that the French Freethinkers who are associated for this purpose have the assistance of the Astronomical Society for their project.

BIBLE NAMES.—II.

OF the seven nations mightier than themselves whom the Israelites were to exterminate (Deut. vii., 1), some are represented as bearing uncomplimentary names which no nations would be likely to call themselves by. Hittite signifies "who is broken, or fears." Hivite signifies "wicked." Amorite means "bitter, a rebel." Such words could hardly be the proper historical names of these people. If the etymologies given are correct, such names must have been merely the nicknames or terms of abuse in which the Israelites spoke of tribes they hated and wished to exterminate as justifiably to their consciences as possible.¹

¹ Of the other four nations, Canaanites signifies traders or possessors; Perizzites, dwellers in unwallled villages; Gergashites, arriving from pilgrimage; Jebusites, inhabitants of Jebus, which means troad-

Such personal names as Korah (bald, frozen, icy), Cozbi (liar), Theudas (false teacher), can scarcely have been the real names of the persons thus stigmatised. The son of King Saul certainly was not named Ishbosheth, or a man of shame; and his grandson was not named Mephibosheth (out of my mouth proceeds reproach). These latter names were subsequent substitutions for names which included and honored the hateful god Baal. But the Bible represents them as the actual names by which these princes were known, and by which they were addressed (2 Sam. xix., 25). 1 Chronicles viii., 33, 34, and ix., 39, 40, give the names correctly as Esh-baal and Merib-baal. It is very strange that such names could have been given to princes of Israel unless Saul and Jonathan were worshippers of Baal rather than of Jehovah—a probable but carefully-concealed fact, which would show how mythical or unhistorical was the Jehovistic piety attributed to them in later records.

Lehi, where Samson and his forces slew a thousand men, signifies "jaw." It probably was a mountain gorge, or at least a place which took its name from some fancied similarity to a jaw or mouth. Hence by an undetected pun arose the legend that Samson had killed a thousand men *with* a jaw, and that God refreshed him with water from a hollow place in the jawbone (as narrated in Judges xv., 19), or, more strictly, in the place named Lehi (as the same event is differently rendered in the Revised Version).

Jerusalem is said to signify the vision or possession of peace. Hence it would appear that the many prophecies of visionary peace and prosperity to the sacred city were of the nature of puns. The prophets played upon the meaning of the name and worked it out into glowing anticipations of the realisation of the signification.

Isaiah signifies the salvation of the Lord. His frequent announcements of the salvation of the Lord in various forms were thus but natural products or repetitions of his own name. Jeremiah, whose name signifies exaltation or grandeur of the Lord, seldom speaks of "salvation."

Lucifer signifies light-bringer, and is a very curious name for orthodox people to give to the Arch-fiend, whom they stigmatise as the Father of Lies. It is true that they hold that he first tempted man to acquire knowledge and decency, and that they themselves, without owning it, have an innate antipathy to light. But the word is only used once in the Bible, in Isaiah xiv., 12, where Isaiah exclaims: "How art thou fallen from heaven, O Lucifer, son of the morning?" The object poetically addressed is really the morning star (see Revised Version), and it was only gradually that Christians associated the name with the personality of Satan, the step being probably helped by such parallel exclamations as Christ's—"I beheld Satan as lightning fall from heaven" (Luke x., 18), and by the general idea of the disastrous influences of the stars.

Satan signifies adversary, enemy, accuser. The personality was apparently evolved from a common noun or common idea, which gradually became a proper definite personification and a distinct individual.

El, the word for God, signifies power. Allah, the Mohammedan word for God, is probably derived from it. Many biblical names are compounds of this root. Elijah (God the Lord) consists of El and Jah (Yahveh, or Jehovah, the more sacred personal name of the Jewish national deity). Elisha signifies the salvation of God. Eli, Elishu, Eleazar, Daniel, Samuel, and some score names or more besides, are also pious references to the "mighty one," who was a favorite object of Eastern adoration. Baal is also probably another form of the word, the last syllable containing the root, and the whole word signifying the strong one who rules or subdues.

Jah, Yahveh, or Jehovah, signifies the everlasting, the self-existing. "I am that I am."

Goliath signifies exile or revolution. Possibly the legend of David the giant-killer only meant that David overcame exile or revolution; but it would be rash to accept every plausible explanation that suggests itself.

The name of "Evil-Merodach" deceives most readers. The "Evil" is *not* an English prefix indicative of wickedness. It merely signifies "the fool of." Evil-Merodach—the fool of Merodach.

ing under foot or contemning. Except the last, these are not such names of glory or honor, or triumph or piety, as such nations or tribes would probably have bestowed on themselves. Thus the Israelites took their name from Israel—a prince with God, or prevailing under God. The Jews took their name from Judah, the praise of the Lord.

Lazarus means the help of God, a signification which may enable us to understand more clearly the "parable" of Lazarus and Dives.

Iscariot is said to mean (1) man of murder, (2) member of the tribe of Issachar, (3) native of Iscariot, a town of which I can find no traces in my Bible Concordance, and which may be invented to account for the personal name. If Judas simply was named after the tribe of Issachar (aided perhaps by evil associations of the word), then as Issachar signifies price, reward, or recompense, there is a highly suspicious connection between the name and the legend of his selling Christ. Perhaps the myth arose solely from the suggestion in the name; or, on the other hand, the epithet may have been conferred through the acceptance of the myth and the need of some ready means of distinguishing Judas, the supposed betrayer, from Judas, the alleged apostle and writer of the shortest book in the Bible.

Aceldama, or the field of blood, being apparently a spot well known to the people of Jerusalem (Acts i., 19), probably by ready association of idea completed the myth of Judas's fate as told in Acts i., 18—20. The distinctly contradictory legend of Judas's fate given in Matt. xxvii., 3-10, also appears to originate in the "field of blood," or "potters' field," though the development and incidents of the two myths are as remarkably different as the Old Testament prophecies with which the conflicting accounts have been fortified. Zechariah's allusion to thirty pieces of silver cast to the potter in the house of the Lord is evidently the source of some of the particulars of the myth, as may be readily seen by comparing Zech. xi., 12, 13, with Matt. xxvii., 9, 10, which wrongly attributes the prophecy to Jeremiah.

Of course, one must not push one's theories too far. One must not expect to explain everything in the Bible by word-significations any more than by sun-myths, nature-worship, astronomical symbolism, comparative mythology, Assyriology, Egyptology, or any other single theory or branch of science. The Bible is a complex piece of religious evolution fixed before our eyes in a literary shape; and the full explanation of the complex work of many minds during many ages must also be complex if it is to be complete. All that I hope to have done is to have made it clear that playing upon words, or the confusion between sound and sense, or fancy and fact, has been one of the many factors that have aided in producing the many-featured fetish of our modern Christianity.

W. P. BALL.

CORRESPONDENCE.

LONDON SECULAR FEDERATION. TO THE EDITOR OF THE "FREETHINKER."

THE newly formed London Secular Federation has authorised us to appeal through your columns, if possible, for pecuniary assistance. As the Federation is formed in order to extend the Freethought cause in London, as well as to strengthen existing Branches of the N.S.S., the contributions of well-to-do Secularists are absolutely necessary. There is a small sum in hand, derived from the fees of the federated Branches, and the generosity of a few individual supporters; but these slender resources will soon be exhausted, and we therefore solicit the immediate aid of all who wish to see a better organisation of our movement in the Metropolis. Subscriptions can be sent to either of the undersigned, but by preference to the Treasurer, at the Hall of Science, 142 Old Street, E.C.

G. W. FOOTE, President.
G. STANDRING, Secretary.
R. O. SMITH, Treasurer.

REVIEW.

Lucifer, a Theosophical Monthly; G. Redway, 15 York St., Covent Garden. No. 5 of this curious magazine has been sent to us for review. It professes itself "Designed to bring to light the hidden things of darkness," but though among its contributors there is "a Master of Wisdom," we doubt if the ordinary reader will obtain even a glimmering of light from its pages. One writer tells us the adept must have an object of love, another that he must be secluded from all passion and "part also with the sense of self-respect and of virtue." The best thing in the number are Gerald Massey's lines on Shakespeare, which are applied to "The Lord Buddha."

"Yes," said Mrs. Bacon to her neighbor, Mrs. Ponsonby, "I always did admire Samuel. He is the most dignified-looking man when he is asleep in church, that I ever saw!"

COLONEL INGERSOLL INTERVIEWED.

(From the New York *Truthseeker*.)

Question. What do you think of the Methodist minister at Nashville, Tenn., who, from his pulpit, denounced the theatrical profession, without exception, as vicious, and of the congregation which passed resolutions condemning Miss Emma Abbott for rising in church and contradicting him, and of the Methodist bishop who likened her to a "painted courtesan," and invoked the aid of the law "for the protection of public worship" against "strolling players"?

Answer. The Methodist minister of whom you speak without doubt uttered his real sentiments. The Church has always regarded the stage as a rival, and all its utterances have been as malicious as untrue. It has always felt that the money given to the stage was in some way taken from the pulpit. It is on this principle that the pulpit wishes everything, except the church, shut up on Sunday. It knows that it cannot stand free and open competition.

All well-educated ministers know that the Bible suffers by a comparison with Shakespeare. They know that there is nothing within the lids of what they call "the sacred book" that can for one moment stand side by side with "Lear," or "Hamlet," or "Julius Caesar," or "Antony and Cleopatra," or with any other play written by the immortal man. They know what a poor figure the Davids, and the Abrahams, and the Jeremiahs, and the Lots, the Jonahs, the Jobs, and the Noahs cut when on the stage with the great characters of Shakespeare. For these reasons, among others, the pulpit is malicious and hateful when it thinks of the glories of the stage. What minister is there now living who could command the prices commanded by Edward Booth or Joseph Jefferson; and what two clergymen, by making a combination, could contend successfully with Robson and Crane? How many clergymen would it take to command, at regular prices, the audiences that attend the presentation of Wagner's operas?

It is very easy to see why the pulpit attacks the stage. Nothing could have been in more wretched taste than for the minister to condemn Miss Emma Abbott for rising in church and defending not only herself, but other good women who are doing honest work for an honest living. Of course, no minister wishes to be answered; no minister wishes to have anyone in the congregation call for the proof. A few questions would break up all the theology in the world. Ministers can succeed only when congregations keep silent. Where superstition succeeds, doubt must be dumb.

The Methodist bishop who attacked Miss Abbott simply repeated the language of several centuries ago. In the laws of England actors were described as "sturdy vagrants," and this bishop calls them "strolling players." If we only had some strolling preachers like Garrick, like Edwin Forrest, or Booth and Barrett, or Haworth, or some crusade sisters like Mrs. Siddons, or Madame Ristori, or Charlotte Cushman, or Madame Modjeska, how fortunate the Church would be!

Question. What is your opinion of the relative merits of the pulpit and the stage, preachers, and actors?

Answer. We must remember that the stage presents an ideal life. It is a world controlled by the imagination—a world in which the justice delayed in real life may be done, and in which that may happen which, according to the highest ideal, should happen. It is a world, for the most part, in which evil does not succeed, in which the vicious are foiled, in which the right, the honest, the sincere, and the good prevail. It cultivates the imagination, and in this respect is far better than the pulpit. The mission of the pulpit is to narrow and shrivel the human mind. The pulpit denounces the freedom of thought and of expression; but on the stage the mind is free, and for thousands of years the poor, the oppressed, the enslaved, have been permitted to witness plays wherein the slave was freed, wherein the oppressed became the victor, and where the downtrodden rose supreme.

And there is another thing. The stage has always laughed at the spirit of caste. The low-born lass has loved the prince. All human distinctions in this ideal world have for the moment vanished, while honesty and love have triumphed. The stage lightens the cares of life. The pulpit increases the tears and groans of man. There is this difference: The pretence of honesty and the honesty of pretence.

Question. How do you view the Episcopal scheme of building a six-million-dollar untaxed cathedral in this city for the purpose of "uniting the sects," and, when that is accomplished, "unifying the world in the love of Christ," and thereby abolishing misery?

Answer. I regard the building of an Episcopal cathedral simply as a piece of religious folly. The world will never be converted by Christian palaces and temples. Every dollar used in its construction will be wasted. It will have no tendency to unite the various sects; on the contrary, it will excite the envy and jealousy of every other sect. It will widen the gulf between the Episcopal and the Methodist, between the Episcopal and the Presbyterian, and this hatred will continue until the other sects build a cathedral just a little larger, and then the envy and the hatred will be on the other side.

Religion will never unify the world, and never will give peace to mankind. There has been more war in the last 1800 years

than during any similar period within historic times. War will be abolished, if it ever is abolished, not by religion, but by intelligence. It will be abolished when the poor people of Germany, of France, of Spain, of England, and other countries find that they have no interest in war. When those who pay, and those who do the fighting, find that they are simply destroying their own interests, wars will cease.

There ought to be a national court to decide national difficulties. We consider a community civilised when the individuals of that community submit their differences to a legal tribunal; but there being no national court, nations now sustain, as to each other, the relation of savages—that is to say, each one must defend its rights by brute force. The establishment of a national court civilises nations, and tends to do away with war.

Christianity caused so much war, so much bloodshed, that Christians were forced to interpolate a passage to account for their history, and the interpolated passage is, "I came not to bring peace but a sword." Suppose that all the money wasted in cathedrals in the Middle Ages had been used for the construction of school houses, academies, and universities, how much better the world would have been! Suppose that instead of supporting hundreds of thousands of idle priests, the money had been given to men of science for the purpose of finding out something of benefit to the human race here in this world.

Question. What is your opinion of "Christian charity" and the "fatherhood of God" as an economic polity for abolishing poverty and misery?

Answer. Of course, the world is not to be civilised, and clothed, and fed through charity. Ordinary charity creates more want than it alleviates. The greatest possible charity is the greatest possible justice. When proper wages are paid, when everyone is as willing to give what a thing is worth as he is now willing to get it for less, the world will be fed and clothed.

I believe in helping people to help themselves. I believe that corporations, and successful men, and superior men intellectually, should do all within their power to keep from robbing their fellow-men. The superior man should protect the inferior. The powerful should be the shield of the weak. To-day it is, for the most part, exactly the other way. The failures among men become the food of success.

The world is to grow better and better through intelligence, through a development of the brain, through taking advantage of the forces of nature, through science, through chemistry, and through the arts. Religion can do nothing except sow the seeds of discord between men and nations. Commerce, manufactures, and the arts tend to peace and the well-being of the world. What is known as religion—that is to say, a system by which this world is wasted in preparation for another—a system in which the duties of man are greater to God than to his fellow men—a system that denies the liberty of thought and expression—tends only to discord and retrogression. Of course I know that religious people cling to the Bible on account of the good that is in it, and in spite of the bad, and I know that Freethinkers throw away the Bible on account of the bad that is in it, in spite of the good. I hope the time will come when that book will be treated like other books, and will be judged upon its merits, apart from the fiction of inspiration. The Church has no right to speak of charity, because it is an object of charity itself. It gives nothing; all it can do is to receive. At best it is only a respectable beggar. I never cared to hear one who receives alms pay a tribute to charity. The one who gives alms should pay this tribute. The amount of money expended upon churches, and priests, and all the paraphernalia of superstition, is more than enough to drive the wolves from the doors of the world.

(To be concluded.)

PROFANE JOKES.

Why is "I" the happiest vowel in the alphabet? Because it is in bliss, whilst "E" is in hell, and all the rest in purgatory.

"How is it," said a man to his neighbor, "That parson W——, the laziest man living, writes these interminably long sermons?" "Why," says the other, "he probably starts writing, and then is too lazy to stop."

A three-year-old girl accompanied her mother to witness a baptism; the next day, arranging her dolls along the edge of the bath-tub, she prepared one of them for immersion. Her mother advanced within listening distance, and heard the following address to the candidate:—"I now baptise you in the name of the Father and the Son, and into the hole you go."

At a meeting of creditors a pious debtor, of the Pecksniffian type, offered his creditors the magnificent dividend of tenpence in the £. "Gentlemen," said he, "I cannot pay you more in this world, but I hope I shall pay you all the balance in the next." "I for one, will accept," replied one of the unfortunate creditors, "but if you expect me to come groping all over hell after you for the balance you are mightily mistaken."

One day, at the table of the late Dean of Ely, just as the cloth was about to be removed, the subject of discourse happened to be that of an extraordinary mortality amongst the lawyers. "We have lost," said a gentleman, "no less than six eminent barristers in as many months." The Dean, who was quite deaf, rose as his friend finished his remark, and said grace:—"For this and every other mercy the Lord's name be praised."

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