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THE CHRISTMAS TREE
OF THE
FREE THUNDER

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THE FREETHINKER.

EDITED BY G. W. FOOTE.

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[Price 3d.

GOD IN A CRADLE.

NEARLY two thousand years ago a young Jewess was married to an elderly Jew. Her name was Mary and his was Joseph. Two commoner names could not be found, nor probably two commoner people. They discovered nothing, wrote nothing, said nothing, and did nothing of any importance. Their sole achievement was producing children, of whom they had about a dozen. But producing children is a very ordinary feat, especially among Jews, who have always been notably prolific since the days of Pharaoh. Where Joseph and Mary were born nobody knows, and the date of their birth is equally obscure. We possess just as much information about the time and place of their death. Nothing is known as to where they were buried, or what inscription was cut on their tombstones. History is silent as to what undertaker carried out the funeral arrangements. Their biographies might be written in twenty lines without containing twenty facts.

The only fact known about Joseph, besides his being the husband of Mary, is that he was a carpenter. There is nothing remarkable in this, for carpenters were always a numerous class. He appears also to have been an indifferent workman, which again is nothing extraordinary. Yet he was celebrated for one thing. He had a son, or at least his wife had, who was able to stretch doors, sideboards, seats and flooring, when they did not fit; on one occasion he thus saved Joseph from the loss of two years' work on a state-chair ordered by a nabob of the district. But, notwithstanding this immense advantage over rival tradesmen, Joseph seems to have remained poor. Perhaps he was too great a blockhead to be saved from poverty even by miracles. Perhaps he was too fond of the spirit. Perhaps his wife wasted his money in extravagance. Perhaps he

frequently had his shop burnt down without being insured. Or perhaps he invested his savings in some enterprise managed by the boss of the parish synagogue. No doubt one or all of these misfortunes gave rise to the popular exclamation of "Poor Joseph!"

Mary was in herself no more remarkable than Joseph. She probably cooked and stitched for her old man, got up his linen if he had any, and took care of his Sunday suit if he possessed one. Anyhow, the long family must have kept her pretty busy. Her day's toil was probably laborious, and when at night, after counting over the youngsters, she retired to the conjugal couch, we have no doubt she slept the sleep of the just. She and Joseph were in all probability as pious as they were commonplace, and it is very unlikely that their consciences were ever disturbed by the indiscreet sacrilege of a pork supper.

Yet this Jewess was accidentally the most remarkable woman that ever lived. She was the mother of God. Start not reader! It is perfectly true, unless the Bible lies. Protestants hesitate to say it plainly. They beat about the bush, and are afraid to express in plain language what they admit they will be damned if they don't believe. Catholics are less squeamish. They sing and pray to the Mother



"Now the birth of Jesus was in this wise."—MATT. I., 18.

of God. Nay, they go farther. Intoxicated with their own audacity, they push the miraculous process a generation farther back, and introduce us to God's grandmother.

Joseph, however, was not God's father, although he adopted him and brought him up as his own. There was no blood relationship between them. What! you exclaim, no blood relationship between a child and his mother's husband! Well, in some cases there is not, and this was one of them. How then did it happen? Why, in this way.

Joseph and Mary were, according to custom, betrothed before marriage. No doubt they had a pleasant

time. Joseph adjourned to the old people's house at the close of his day's work, after a good wash and a brush-up, and took Mary out for a walk in the gloaming. They chattered as lovers have always done, Joseph's arm slipped round her waist, she leaned her head on his shoulder, and they kissed each other under the winking stars. When they returned Joseph looked as though he had never been within ten feet of his girl, and Mary's demure aspect would have defied the innuendoes of a Mephistopheles.

But one night poor Joseph's felicity was, unconsciously to himself, invaded by a stranger. After he had gone home to dream of his sweetheart, and Mary had retired to her maiden pillow, she received an unexpected visit from a handsome young archangel, named Gabriel. His features were inexpressibly beautiful, his form was more perfect than Apollo's, his brown locks hung in graceful curls about his ivory neck, and his splendid wings glowed with all the colors of the rainbow. Had he been an ugly burglar, Mary would have hidden her head under the clothes; but she was so fascinated by his immortal loveliness and his seraphic smile, that she sat up and stared at him with mingled alarm and admiration.

Gracefully bowing his graceful head, Gabriel stated that he was sent from heaven to inform her that she should have a child without Joseph's assistance. She was naturally startled at this intelligence, but Gabriel assured her that with God nothing was impossible, and before he left she was fully persuaded that his prophecy would be fulfilled.

Mary hid all these things in her heart. She said not a word to Joseph or the old people, until her condition could no longer be concealed, when she told them everything. Her parents laughed at her story, and it was with great difficulty that her mother was restrained from giving her a bald head. As it was she gave her an illuminated face. Joseph swore that her story was a flam, and walked out of the house, vowing never to see her again. He then went home, drowned his sorrows in three bottles of wine, and fell dead—asleep.

While in this condition he had a dream. Gabriel appeared to him, stated that Mary's baby was "of the Holy Ghost," and warned him against treating her with any cruelty or disrespect. When he awoke he believed it all, and soon afterwards he married his young woman, much to the delight of the old people, who had anticipated a frightful scandal.

Some profane persons say that Joseph was easily satisfied. They doubt whether any young fellow courting a girl nowadays would believe such a story on the same evidence. They object that a dream is a shadowy basis for the doctrine of the incarnation. They assert that if Jesus wanted to prove his divine origin beyond all dispute he should have dispensed with a mother as well as a father. That, they say, would have been a miracle; but there is no miracle in a child being born without a father, for it happens every day. Let the reader, however, pay no heed to these sceptical wretches, as he values the salvation of his immortal soul. Belief is easy, and hell is hot.

In due course (reader, you *must* believe it) Mary's miraculous baby came to light. Raphael's pictures, which were painted from original photographs, give us an idea of his beauty. And this beautiful baby was God. His name was Jesus (or Joshua), but he was really God.

God cried, and screamed and kicked. God flung about his little arms, God made aimless dashes into space with his little arms. God stared foolishly at his own little toes. God smiled when he was comfortable, and howled when pricked by a nasty pin. God was suckled at Mary's breast. God messed his napkins. God lay in a cradle and was rocked asleep. God had the measles, and perhaps the whooping-cough and scarletina. Eighteen centuries later God would have been vaccinated. God learned to walk by the family furniture. God often tumbled down on his nose or on the broader part he once displayed to Moses. God was taught his letters. God got spanked when he misbehaved, and, as soon as he was big enough, God went out and played at marbles and mud-pies with other boys, some of whom he thrashed, and some of whom thrashed him.—Here endeth the lesson. Let us pray.

G. W. FOOTE.

BIBLE STORIES REVISED.

I.—THAT BEAR STORY.

Now it came to pass in the days of King Ahab, that Elisha, son of Shaphat of Abelmeholah, began to tire of ploughing with his father's oxen, saying, "Behold, is it not better to be a prophet? They toil not, neither do they spin, and though that hairy man of God, Elijah the Tishbite, is but arrayed in a leathern girdle and mantle, yet do all the people fear him, and even kings obey him. Go to, now. I, even I, will also be a prophet."

Now Elisha had seen that whenever Jahveh or his ministers called upon women, however barren they had been, the visit had always proved fruitful. He resolved therefore to pay a prophetic visit to the wives of the sons of the prophets. But behold they would have none of him, but tore his hair from his head, saying, "Go and plough with thy father's oxen, thou son of Belial. Thou art no prophet, neither the son of a prophet." And Elisha fled full sore and wroth, but his hair was left in the hands of the women. And behold on his way he met Elijah the prophet, and, as when Jahveh met Moses at the inn and sought to kill him, so did Elisha unto Elijah. And he slew him, even as Moses slew the Egyptian, and hid the body in the sand. And he took his mantle, giving out that Elisha had called him to be a prophet and then had gone to heaven in a fiery chariot.

Now there was a certain woman of Shunem, who, after the death of Elijah, made a bed for Elisha, for she had no child and her husband was old. Yet was she wroth that Elisha was bald; for all the hair had been torn out by the roots. And she said unto him, "Arise! anoint thy head with bear's grease and thy beard. Then mayest thou return to me, looking even like unto a prophet."

Now in the woods near Bethel there were two she-bears, but they were too thin and hungry to have much fat, and Elisha was sore afraid of them. And it came to pass that in the village he saw a number of little children playing. And the spirit of Jahveh fell on him, and he called them, saying: "Dear little ones, come up with me into the woods, and I will show you something pretty." And they followed him, laughing and calling out "Go up, thou baldhead!" "Go up, thou baldhead!" And he led them to the den of the bears, keeping near to the trees. And when he heard the bears growl, he sprang up a tree. But the poor children were torn and eaten by the bears. And behold they grew sleek and fat; for many meals like unto this did Elisha bring them in the name of the Lord. And when they were gorged and sleeping after one of these feasts, Elisha descended and killed them. And the grease he made into holy ointment, according to the receipt which Jahveh had given to Aaron. And behold, he was speedily blessed with heirs.

II.—THAT WHALE STORY.

IN those days Jonah, the son of Amittai, deserted the laws of his forefathers, and took to eating pork chops for supper. And behold, in the night, when deep sleep falleth on men, old Jahveh appeared unto Jonah in a dream, saying, "Arise, pack up thy portmanteau and go and cry out against the ninnies of Nineveh." And Jonah awoke, and he was sore afraid. "Now in the name of Baalzebub, god of Ekron," cried he, "what can Jahveh have to do with Nineveh? He never used to have any concern except for Palestine and his own people." Nevertheless, knowing what a Tartar Jahveh was when in his tantrums, he deemed it expedient to fly from Jahveh's presence to Tarshish. So he mounted his bicycle and rode off. Now it came to pass that when he arrived at Joppa there was a celebrated inn in that city, and the sign of that inn was "The Whale." And Jonah entered "The Whale" and called for a drink and a rest. Now the liquor in that region was strong, cheering the heart of God and man. And Jonah drank deep, till he became as one that lieth down in the midst of the sea, or as he that lieth upon the top of a mast. And he dreamt, and lo in his dream he was already on the ocean. And when he awoke he called for more strong drink to steady himself. Three days

and nights did he stay drinking inside "The Whale," and being furiously drunk, he threw the furniture of the inn out of the window into the streets of Joppa, declaring it was necessary to cast the wares into the sea to lighten the ship. And when the landlord of "The Whale" perceived he had no money to pay for the damages, he kicked him out into the street. And Jonah, being still somewhat mixed, went home and wrote his adventures in one of the most sacred books of the Bible.

Moral—Beware of strong drink and avoid pork chops for supper.

J. M. WHEELER.

Holy Moses.

MOSES was, so God has said,
The meekest man that e'er broke bread (a)
Since our race began.

A leader bold, above all fear,
He in the battle led the rear (b)
And in retreat the van.

He smote a man and left him dead,
And to the Midianites he fled :
In fearless faith he ran. (c)

He lived with Jethro, their high priest,
And learned of him one thing at least—
How priestcraft governs man.

He married Jethro's daughter, too,
And studied priestcraft through and through,
And liked that good old plan.
In forty years, while growing grey,
He learned how he might steal and slay,
Yet be a meek old man.

He went to Pharaoh and his men,
And put the land of Egypt then
Under a fearful ban. (d)
He turned the waters into blood,
Brought frogs in millions from the mud—
He was a nice old man.

Their horses, cattle, every beast,
He killed them all three times at least
(By some peculiar plan)
With murrain and with boil and blain,
And storms of hail and fiery rain—
This wonderful old man.

The eldest born of man and beast
Was killed, while Jews in Goshen feast,
And get what "spoil" they can :
Gems and rings for ears and noses
As ordered by the Lord and Moses, (e)
The pious, good old man.

To the Red Sea they hurried fast ;
Through waves that stood like walls they passed—
A goodly caravan :
A nation starting forth to steal
Lands that the Lord would soon reveal
Unto this meek old man.

For when we read of all his acts,
And learn by heart the precious facts,
'Tis God's own Word we scan.
In slaying with his magic rod,
Or by the sword, we know that God
Inspired this holy man.

He saw God on the mountain top ;
For forty days he there did stop,
And ate no food nor drank one drop, (f)
Like Turks in Ramazan ;
Then of the crowd he slew some half
For worshipping a golden calf : (g)
This meek and mild old man.

In peril once of life and limb,
The Midianites had sheltered him,
A stranger to their clan.
He owed them his best years of life,
His home, his joys, his wedded wife— (h)
A fugitive young man.

The next time that he came that way,
Leader of hosts, with power to slay,
His gratitude began.
He slaughtered all those Midianites,
But kept such girls as were not frights ; (i)
He was a meek old man.

The sword, he swore, should not be sheathed
While one living soul there breathed
From Beersheba to Dan : (j)
Extermination was God's mode
Of making smooth his people's road,
And starting his religious code—
A truly pious plan.

When Moses died there rose a fray,
The Devil and Michael fought all day
As only angels can.
The Devil kicked and scratched and roared,
The feathers flew, the sweat-drops poured,
They clawed the meek old man. (k)

Since certain Christians know full well
That there are shrieking babes in hell
No longer than a span.
Surely the Devil will be mad
If to his sights he cannot add
This truly meek old man.

W. P. BALL.

Curious Police Case.

AN elderly individual of the Hebrew persuasion, who gave his name as Israel Abrahams, broker, but who was described on the charge-sheet as *Jahveh Tsilkenu*, alias *Adonai*, alias *Shammoi*, alias *Elohim*, was brought before the Lord Mayor charged with being concerned in a multitude of nefarious practices carried on by a gang of banditti who were known as "Jahveh's people."

Inspector Sharp of the C division, in stating the case, said that from information received he arrested the prisoner in Petticoat Lane. On his person was found a Hebrew book consisting of a number of antiquated and obscene documents, which of themselves would be sufficient to prove the prisoner to be connected with villains of the deepest dye. The book in question was one of instructions to the banditti, and he must trouble his lordship with an extract or two. The first passage he would cite was from a book called Numbers, in which Jahveh's people were told, "Ye shall drive out all the inhabitants of the land from before you, ye shall dispossess the inhabitants of the land and dwell therein" The instruction in question read as follows: "Now therefore kill every male among the little ones, and kill every woman that hath known man by lying with him. But all the women children, that have not known a man by lying with him, keep alive for yourselves" (xxx. 17-18). Numerous passages showed that these and other barbarities had been put into execution. He would direct his lordship's attention to Deut. ii. 34 ; iii. 6 ; Josh. vi. 21 ; viii. 26 ; x. 26 ; xi. 9. Several of these passages proved that the prisoner deserved prosecution by the Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals. In regard to the charge of obscenity, he would ask his lordship to read the instructions given to Hosea i. 2. Many of these passages were unfit for public perusal, but his lordship could refer to Gen. xix. 30-36, and Gen. xxxviii., Lev. xv., etc. One more charge, and that the most dreadful, was alleged against the prisoner by his own followers, and that one was that he had condemned his own innocent son to death. Inspector Sharp had not found any passage conclusively proving this in the documents in question, but instructions had certainly been given to one Abraham—"Take now thy son, thine only son and offer him for a burnt-offering" (Gen. xxii. 2).

His lordship remarked that after an examination of the documents in question he was of opinion that the monstrous brutality therein mentioned took place a long while ago, and that the Jahveh, the instigator of them, had long been out of the reach of human punishment. It certainly showed very bad taste on the part of the prisoner to go about with such an obscene book on his person, but he saw no evidence to connect him with the atrocious deeds of his forefathers. The prisoner was accordingly discharged.

(a) Numbers xii., 3. (b) Ex. xvii., 9-13. (c) Hebrews xi., 27
(d) Ex. vii.—xiv. (e) Ex. xii., 35, 36. (f) Ex. xxxiv., 28.
(g) Ex. xxxii., 27-29.

(h) Ex. ii., 15, 16, 20-22 ; iii., 1 ; iv., 18, 19.

(i) Numbers xxxi. (j) Deut. xx., 16, 17. (k) Jude, 9.



THE HOUSE OF PRAYERS.

ENJOYABLE SUNDAY-SCHOOL PICNIC.—“ Oh, but haven't we had fun to-day !” exclaimed a young lady to some of her companions, “ I don't care if it was a Sunday-school picnic, I've had one of the best times. Say, Mary, were you with us when [outbreak of laughter]—when the minister kneeled down to ask the blessing on our lunch there by the big tree, the one that—” Here occurred the third laughing fit and the first pause for breath. Mary improved the opportunity by replying that she was not there, wherever it was, and to inquire what was so funny. “ Rev. Hobbs lunched with us,” resumed the first maiden. “ We spread our things out on the grass, and so he kneeled down to ask the blessing. [More laughter]. It—it makes me laugh so I can't tell it. Well, as I said, he was kneeled down. He started

out to say: 'We thank thee, Lord, in the name of thy son Jesus Christ,' but no sooner had he said this than he jumped about five feet up in the air. You ought to have heard the way he spoke those last two words. He just yelled 'em out as if he was swearing. It was shocking, and we girls started to run away, when Jimmy Johnson came and told us what the matter was.” “ And what was it?” “ Well, just as the minister reached the 'Je'—a horrid wasp bit him right through his pants.”

THE Police Commissioners of Broughty Ferry, near Dundee, have been compelling house-proprietors to lay down concrete on the footpath in front of their properties. An old lady residing in a cottage proudly told a friend the other day that the front of her house had been “consecrated up to the vera door-step.”



“THE IMITATION OF CHRIST” (Booth's Edition).

Some time ago one of “General” Booth's officers rode into a northern town after the style of Christ's entry into Jerusalem. There is no reason why this should not be worked up by Showman Booth, who is blasphemous enough for anything. Our artist has accordingly drawn this sketch, which may furnish the “General” with a few useful hints.





WOMEN GENI

Joseph's Coat.

[REVISED VERSION.]

(See Illustration on p. 5.)

1 Now there dwelt in the parish of Shoreditch, near unto Petticoat Lane, an Israelite whose name was Jacob;

2 And he was a usurer, who lent money unto the needy for large interest, receiving of them pledges until the uttermost farthing was paid, so that his shop was filled with all kinds of merchandise.

3 And Jacob was twice married, unto Leah the daughter of Laban, and unto her sister Rachel; and he had also many concubines.

4 And by Leah and his concubines he had ten sons, the eldest of whom was Reuben; and by Rachel he had two sons, whose names were Joseph and Benjamin.

5 Now Jacob loved Joseph above all his brethren, for he was the son of his old age.

6 And he showed favor unto him, and treated him tenderly, and gave him a beautiful fur coat which he bought on the first day of the week in Petticoat Lane, and took him into the business, and gave him one-half of all the profits.

7 But it displeased his brethren, who said, Lo now, our father Jacob doeth nothing for us, but all for this upstart; him he honoreth and rewardeth, but us he despiseth and keepeth poor.

8 And from that moment they took counsel against him and sought how they might remove him.

9 And they conspired with the captain of a ship which traded unto Patagonia, and one night when Joseph was well drunken they took him on board.

10 Whereupon the vessel set sail, and when Joseph awoke she was out at sea.

11 And when he complained unto the mariners, behold, they mocked at him, and he wept.

12 But Reuben and his brethren were exceeding glad, and they took Joseph's fur coat which they had stripped from him, and went unto the shop of their father Jacob.

13 And Reuben said unto him, What wilt thou lend me hereon?

14 And Jacob said, Is it square? And Reuben answered, Yea, it is square.

15 But when Jacob spread out the coat upon the counter he was astonished, and he cried with a loud voice, It is my son Joseph's.

16 And Reuben said, Nay, father, it is not so; thy sons found it at the docks. And all his brethren laughed unto themselves.

17 But Jacob cried yet louder, It is my dear son Joseph's, for here is his card in the breast pocket. Peradventure he is drowned, and my grey hairs will be brought down with sorrow to the grave.

18 And Jacob wept, refusing to be comforted.

19 Thereupon Reuben embraced him, saying, Oh, my father, be not so downcast. If it be thy dear son Joseph's, peradventure he is not drowned, but may return unto thee in the morning as he often useth.

20 And while Reuben comforted his father, behold, Dan crept softly behind the counter; and being, as Jacob had often told him, a serpent in the way, he put his hand into the till and took out all that was found therein, even all the gold, the silver and the bronze.

21 And therewith Joseph's brethren paid for a noble supper at a neighboring inn, and they ate and drank of the best until they could eat and drink no more.

22 And all the acts of Joseph—how he sailed unto Patagonia and was tempted of the captain's wife, how he was thrown into prison for being unable to pay his fare, and how at last he returned home unto his father Jacob—are they not all written in the Book of Fate?

The first animals that came out of the ark were calves. They were on Noah's legs.

A YOUNG minister and his wife visited the congregation where his father was previously the pastor. He preached on the Sunday; and, after service, one of the venerable elders, speaking with the wife of the young minister, said: "Your husband preached from the same text that his father had the last time he was in the pulpit." "Indeed!" replied the lady, "I hope it was not the same sermon, too?" "Oh, no!" replied the elder, "his father was a good preacher."

"I WAS mighty thankful for that rain we got yesterday," said a Texas Siftings man. "Yes, it did the corn a world of good. How many acres have you got planted of corn?" "I've got no corn planted this year at all. I wasn't thinking about crops." "Well, then, how can the rain benefit you?" "You see, I don't often get a decent dinner at home, as my wife says she can't cook in a hot weather; but yesterday there was to be a church picnic, and she fixed up a lunch-basket for the preacher's table, but it rained so the picnic could not come off. To keep the preacher's lunch from spoiling we had it for dinner, and it was the best dinner I've had since we were married. There was no end of chickens and jellies and that sort of alleviations. Don't tell me that rain yesterday didn't do any good. It was the most refreshing shower we have had for years."

The Devil's Christmas.

[A PROFANE CHRISTMAS CAROL.]

It was one Christmas night and I sat all alone,
Dreaming over again the old year which had flown;
And as I sat there in the fire's ruddy glow,
A little black something sprang up from below.
'Twas a little black imp! I gazed in surprise;
I thought I was dreaming, and rubbed both my eyes;
But no, 'twas a little black imp I felt sure,
Though I don't recollect having seen one before.
He was not like the imps I had oft heard about,
But I soon was convinced if I felt any doubt.
Though an imp he behaved in an amiable way,
And bowing politely, laughed sprightly and gay.
"I am sent," said the imp, "from the regions below,
And my master who sends me just wishes to know
If you'll kindly step down and give us a call—
You will find us good jovial company all.
He knew you would feel rather gloomy up here,
So you may as well come—there is nothing to fear.
Now I hope, sir, you won't think me rude or too bold,
But I'll mention the fact that I'm devilish cold.
So I crave that your answer much time won't require;
In the meantime I'll just take a seat on the fire."
"But, my dear sir, remember I'm young," pleaded I,
"Don't you think it would do just as well by-and-bye?
I think you may tell my most amiable host
That I'm not quite prepared yet to give up the ghost."
"You mistake, my dear sir," said the imp in reply,
"Don't think for a moment you're called on to die!
I declare and affirm by my honorable name,
(No respectable imp would e'er lie, for shame)
That you shall return to earth safe and sound;
And remember—an imp by his honor is bound."
Said I: "Well, an imp's affirmation's as good
As the oath of the godliest saint that e'er stood;
So on those conditions I think I will go,
And I'll spend Christmas Night with the Devil below."
Then the imp took my hand and the floor opened wide,
And I followed the leap of my queer little guide;
And then we together commenced our descent,
And I found it grow warmer each yard that we went.
Then down, down we flew at a terrible speed,
And hotter and hotter it grew, till, indeed,
I felt I was going the right road to Hell;
But at last to the end of our journey we fell.
'Twas a strange-looking place, all dazzlingly bright,
And above and below seemed blazing with light;
I stood there a moment, just glancing around—
'Twas not a bad place after all, I soon found;
Though the heat of this region did not quite agree
With the delicate frame of a mortal like me;
And the strong fumes of sulphur which everywhere rose
Weren't very much relished by my mortal nose.
However, I thought I would just try my best
To show that I liked it as much as the rest,
For everyone there seemed as merry and gay
As though they were spending a fine holiday.
"This is Hell," said the imp, "as perhaps you can see;
Now, I'll just show you round if you'll please come with me."
The imp took my arm, and we both strolled along;
Then there burst forth a chorus of laughter and song—
A wild Bacchanalian song, full of mirth—
With music more grand than I'd e'er heard on earth.
"Down here you all seem pretty lively," laughed I,
Feeling lively myself, though I scarcely knew why.
"Yes, we do manage things rather pleasant down here,"
Said the imp; "it's a fine jolly life, never fear!"
"I suppose you're the same as we mortals above—
You've sweethearts and wives whom you fondle and love?"
"Sweethearts? of course!" said the imp with a grin,
As he chuckled a fair demoness under the chin;
"The same style of life as you have upon high,
But a thousand times better—you'll see by-and-bye.
But come," said my guide, "there is plenty to view,
And my master's expectantly waiting for you.
His Highness the Prince will be pleased, I am sure;
So pray step this way, sir—I'll hold you secure."
Through a door all encrusted with jewels we passed,
And I stood face to face with the Devil at last.
Then a chorus of shouts from a thousand lips fell—
"We welcome thee, mortal! thrice welcome to Hell!"
His grim sable majesty rose from his throne,
And bowing, embraced me as one of his own.
"You must feel quite at home, sir, the short time you stay;
You must know we are keeping our Christmas Day!"
I bowed in return, and the Prince seemed to me
As courtly and gay as a devil could be.
Then said he with a smile, "Take a seat, if you please,"
And in a few moments I felt quite at ease.
"The banquet is ready—you need not say grace,
We dispense with those trifles in this kind or place."
The viands were brought of the choicest and best;
And the feasting commenced, and I ate with a zest,

All the luxuries, too, of the season were there,
 And a huge Christmas-pudding indeed made me stare!
 "Is it usual," asked I, interested to know,
 "Is it usual to keep Christmas Day here below?"
 "Oh, yes," said the Evil One, winking at me,
 "It's most proper for us above all, don't you see?
 For if Christmas Day had ne'er come about,
 Why, the fires of Hell might as well have gone out.
 'Twas a good thing for us when the Day was first made:
 Since then we've been driving a flourishing trade.
 For the best and the brightest of earth's greatest men
 As their well-earned reward have been sent here since then.
 We've thinkers and wits of each age and each race,
 Whose presence makes Hell a desirable place."
 "But those sinners," asked I, "who in life went astray—
 Those who murdered, who cheated, who robbed—where are
 they?"
 "Oh, they," said his majesty, "ne'er trouble us;
 They're received up above and with no end of fuss.
 For you see," he explained, "tho' blackened with crime,
 They manage to sneak into heaven in time.
 Then there's always such joy o'er those children of sin
 That we even down here sometimes hear the din.
 But those who dare laugh at that musty old Book,
 Or who show that they doubt it, by word or by look,
 Are sent to receive their deserts here below—
 But I make it jolly for *them*, don't you know!
 Now, I've asked you down here," said the Devil to me,
 Just to know how you like the arrangements you see;
 And the reason you're one of a privileged few
 Is because I've few scholars so well up as you,
 And with my tuition you'll soon cap the lot;
 You're about the most promising pupil I've got."
 I felt very flattered, and bowed very low;
 That my master I pleased was a good thing to know.
 With the Devil I drank many glasses that night,
 And we smoked our churchwardens with mutual delight;
 And there, 'midst that jolly and jovial crew,
 I saw many a face which in life I well knew;
 And I saw they all looked quite happy and well,
 And but little the worse for the hot air of Hell.
 We had singing all round, and my host took the chair;
 Then I waltzed with many a demoness fair;
 'Till I saw by my watch how the time travelled on,
 And reluctantly said I should have to be gone.
 Of course they all cordially pressed me to stay,
 But I promised I'd see them at some future day.
 Then I shook hands all round and they gave me a cheer,
 And the Devil wished all men A HAPPY NEW YEAR.

H. G. SWIFT.

The Devil's Wedding.

[A CHRISTMAS STORY.]

It was a dreadfully cold and foggy day in December, and an immense crowd stood round the entrance to the great cathedral where it had been announced the imposing ceremony was to take place. It was an unusually thick fog that filled the atmosphere, and the faces of the vast concourse of people could scarcely be discerned. But it was to be observed that the fair sex was very numerously represented, and, from the tone of voice, we could judge that the male spectators were composed mainly of pious old fogies who felt that their days on earth were numbered, and city missionaries and other professional religionists, who, having no other business on hand, thought that it would do for them to swell the multitude.

"Awfully cold this morning," said a tottering old man to a prim old lady, "and foggy too—too foggy, indeed, for folks like us to be out." "You are quite right, sir," returned the old lady, "but it would not do for us to miss so imposing a scene as the marriage of the king of—well, the next world; and who knows but that he will appreciate this little mark of respect from those who are pretty sure to be constantly in his company in the next world."

"Too true," replied the old man. "Although I don't expect to go to Ottland myself, it is nevertheless well to be on the safe side. And so I am here to-day to catch a glimpse of the bridegroom and give him a cheer." "Very sensible indeed of you," murmured the old lady; "but I want also to see the bride. What a pity it is that the weather is so dull. I should much like to see what she is dressed in. Now, I daresay his Majesty has chosen a very pretty girl—because having tempted so many, as we are told, he will be sure to have made a good choice now."

"I have no doubt of it, ma'am," said the old man sighing, as though he wished there were still another chance for him to do likewise.

During this time the crowd had been considerably augmented, and the hour for the ceremony was fast drawing nigh. Colder and more foggy the atmosphere grew as the moments glided on. Presently a murmur from the crowd, and a sudden pressure of rough folks towards the door of the noble edifice gave evidence that the carriages were at hand. A great shout—nay, a roar of applause—rent the air when his Majesty the King of Ottland, thrusting his head slightly out of the window, bowed gracefully

to the assembled multitude of followers and supporters. Seeing his numerous friends of the clerical fraternity, he smiled a satanic smile and twisted his Mephistophelian moustache; and turning to his charming lady—who, in defiance of all custom, he would have to ride by his side to the church—winked a wink of satisfaction. Another round of applause, and the happy couple stepped out of the carriage and marched proudly through the crowd into the cathedral.

The Pope performed the chief part of the ceremony; he was assisted by all the cardinals, archbishops, bishops, deacons and other lesser-paid officials of his Majesty the Bridegroom, who could possibly render any service. Hymns and anthems were sung, and special prayers offered for long life and prosperity and happiness to the bride and bridegroom; and many indeed were the old slippers and bags of rice that were showered upon the couple as they emerged from the cathedral and once more took their seats in the carriage.

In the evening there was a grand banquet, and much speech-making and toast-proposing, and a very enjoyable time the friends had for the first few hours. His Holiness the Pope proposed the health of his Majesty the King of Ottland, and remarked that he did not know what many of his professional brethren would do if anything should befall his Majesty; for his own part he hoped sincerely that their noble guest would long live to assist the dark and mysterious profession to which he (the Pope) belonged.

In a few appropriate words, his Majesty returned thanks. He was well aware that he had been of great service to the Pope and the clergy generally, but he was really shortly about to retire—in fact, to say adieu. (Loud cries of "No, no.") Yes, he was sorry to say it, but the fact was he had accepted a more lucrative appointment—(murmurs of surprise)—and was going to Russia to fill the post of Chief Secretary to the War Department. He would allow that he had been treated very kindly by the priesthood and by Christians generally until that abominable Education Act—(hisses)—was passed, but since then the clergy had neglected him, and seemed almost afraid to say a word on his behalf. ("No, no"; and "We love you still.") But I am resolved I am sorry to leave you, but having taken to myself a charming young wife, I have determined to leave the country—to emigrate. (Great weeping; and cries of "Don't go.")

There was a loud jingling of bells, a furious knocking together of tables, and a variety of indescribable sounds, when, as by magic the whole company disappeared, and in the seats so recently occupied by the Devil and the Pope and clergy of various denominations, sat a number of men of science, singing praises over the achievements of their brethren, and congratulating themselves that they had been instrumental in eliminating from the minds of the people A GROSS AND EVIL SUPERSTITION.

"Wake up, Johnson," said Sampson to his friend, "the service is over; you have been sleeping long enough." "Yes, and dreaming, too," replied the other. "I always go to sleep in church; by-the-bye, I'll tell you my dream; it's really very funny. No, I won't; on second thoughts I think I'll send it to that awfully blasphemous paper the *Freethinker*." Well, here it is.

ARTHUR B. MOSS.

Brother Gardner's Sermon.

"I HAS been wonderin' if our orthodox religion am not a leetle queer," observed Brother Gardner, as the meeting settled down to business. "De odder day dar was a hangin' across de ribber. A man who had followed a low-down biznes all his life—a man who had eber sot a bad example to de youth of de land—was hung for murder. It was one ob de coolest an' de most blood-thirsty crimes ob de age. De sentence ob de law was carried out, an' our orthodox religium took a hand in it. It sent preachers to the murderer's cell to coax him into a change of heart. It sent men dar to sing de hymns to de praise ob God. It sent women dar fur to tell him dat he war gwine strait from de scaffold to glory."

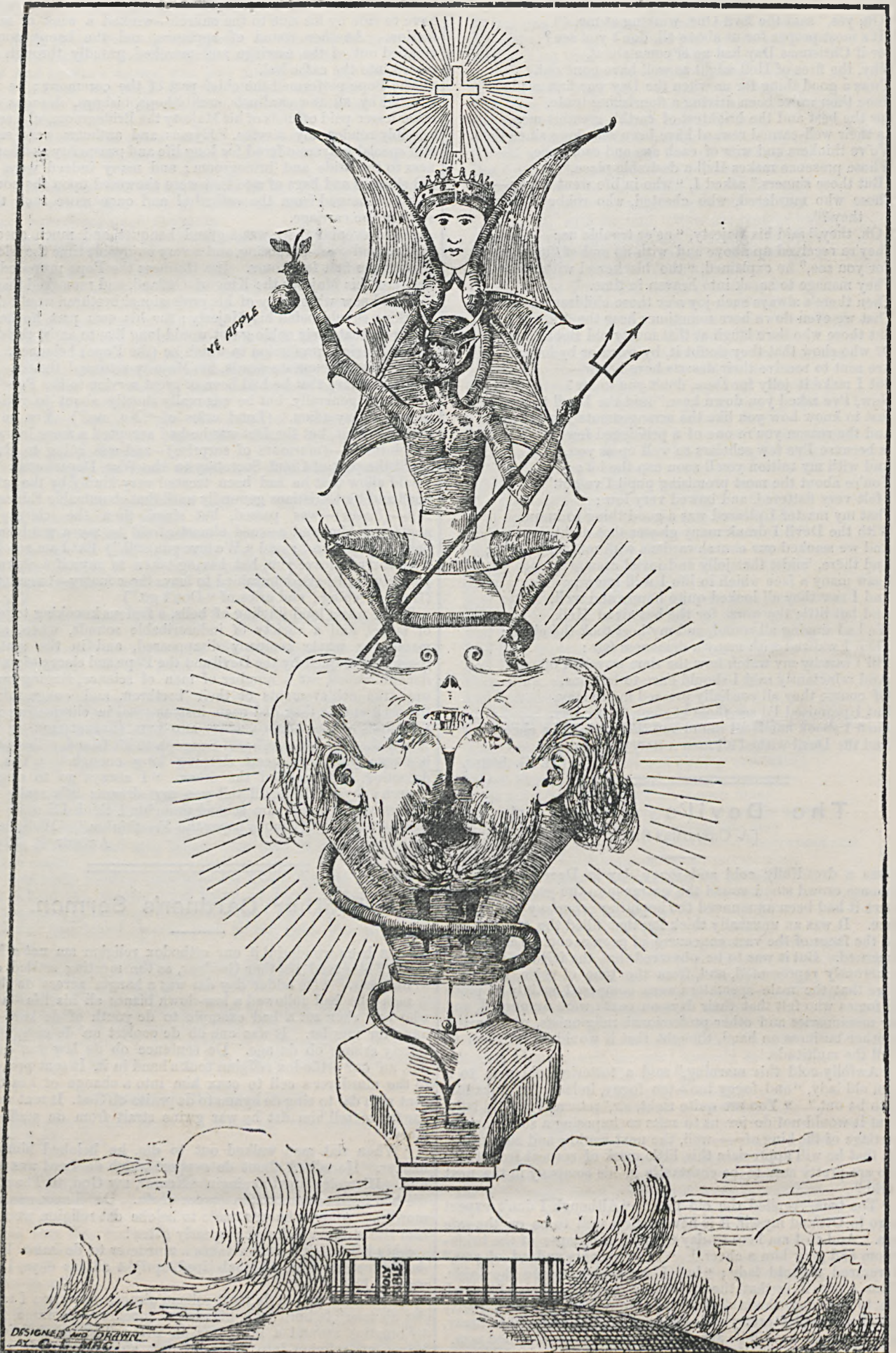
"When dat man walked out to die, he belebed himself a martyr. He talked about de support which de Lord was givin' him. His voice jined in singin' 'Nearer, my God, to Thee.' His life had been one unbroken career of sin. De climax was a foul murder. And yit he was made to belebe dat religium would sail him rite straight to heaven's pearly gates!

"My friends, if religium takes a murderer to de same heaven dat it does de man who hab lived upright all his days, I doan' want to hab it!

"I speak to you in de most solemn airnestness, when I tell you dat dis horrible burlesque, dis absurd mockery, dis farce played by lunatics around a murderer on the gallus, am sufficient to bring our religion into vile contempt, an' to make de sinners doubt dat it am anything beyond a vagary."—*Detroit Free Press*.

A LITTLE girl in church, after the contribution plate had been passed, complacently and audibly said: "I paid for four, mamma. Was that right?"

CANNIBAL KING (to missionary): "I think that the best thing I can do is to eat you." Missionary (in earnest protest): "I do not agree with you, sir." Cannibal King: "Well, I mustn't eat anything that doesn't agree with me."



DESIGNED AND DRAWN
BY G. S. MAGE.

THE CHRISTIAN GOD.

The one "sitting on" the
"Trinity" is the Devil, the active
partner of the Firm of
Johnson, Jesus, Ghost & Co.
He travels for the firm, and
does a "roaring" trade.
He holds in his right hand

THREE-IN-ONE AND ONE-IN-THREE;
BESIDES OLD NICK AND YOUNG MAREE.

The one on the right is the Father, and the other two as well;
The one on the left is the Son, and the other two as well;
The one in the middle is the Ghost and the other two as well.
In fact each is the other two; and the other two are each

his "Frimo-card" — his Trade/
mark — the "Apple." His tail
embraces the "Trinity" to symbolize
his domination and supremacy.
This tail was mistaken in the Garden
of Eden for a serpent; the Devil
was behind the Tree; the one on
the top is the author of the whole lot.

ABRAHAM AND ISAAC.

(REVISED VERSION).



1. The Order for Sacrifice.



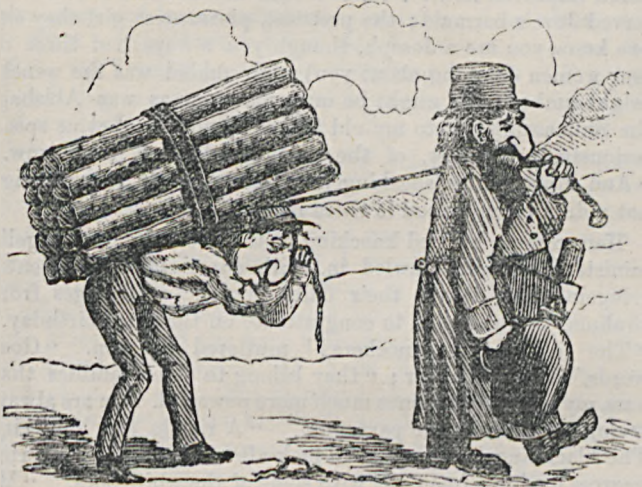
5. Grace Before Meat.



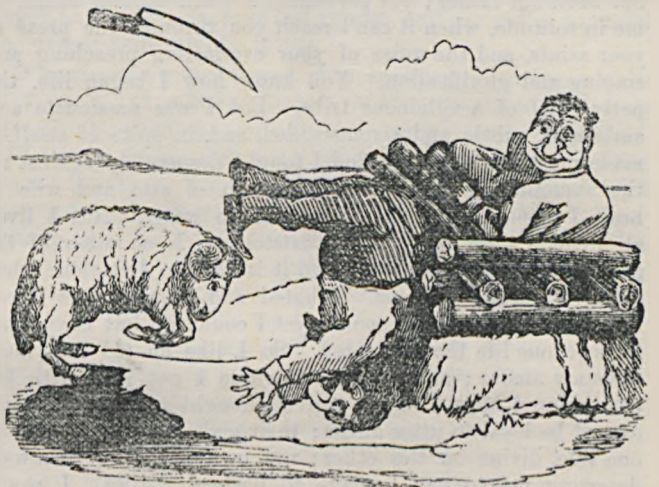
2. Preparations.



6. Billy's Opportunity.



3. Ikey carrieth the Fuel.



7 He rammeth the Old Man.



4. The Rope-tying Trick.



And is Sacrificed for his pains.

Christmas Eve in the Upper Circles.

BY JAMES THOMSON (B.V.)

Poor dear God sat alone in his private chamber, moody, melancholy, miserable, sulky, sullen, weary, dejected, supernally hipped. It was the evening of Sunday, the 24th of December, 1865. Waters continually dripping wear away the hardest stone; year falling after year will at length overcome the strongest god: an oak-tree outlasts many generations of men; a mountain or a river outlasts many celestial dynasties. A cold like a thick fog in his head, rheum in his eyes, and rheumatism in his limbs and shoulders; his back bent, his chin peaked, his poll bald, his teeth decayed, his body all shivering, his brain all muddle, his heart all black care; no wonder the old gentleman looked poorly as he cowered there, dolefully sipping his *Lachryma Christi*. "I wish the other party would lend me some of his fire," he muttered, "for it is horribly frigid up here." The table was crowded and the floor littered with books and documents, all most unreadable reading: missionary reports, controversial divinity, bishops' charges, religious periodicals, papal allocutions and encyclical letters, minutes of Exeter Hall meetings, ponderous blue-books from the angelic bureaux—dreary as the humor of *Punch*, silly as the critiques of the *Times*, idiotic as the poetry of *All the Year Round*. When now and then he eyed them askance he shuddered more shockingly, and looked at his desk with loathing despair. For he had gone through a hard day's work, with extra services appropriate to the sacred season; and for the ten-thousandth time he had been utterly knocked up and bewildered by the Athanasian Creed.

While he sat thus, came a formal tap at the door, and his son entered, looking sublimely good and respectable, pensive with a pensiveness on which one grows comfortably fat. "Ah, my boy," said the old gentleman, "you seem to get on well enough in these sad times: come to ask my blessing for your birthday *fête*?" "I fear that you are not well, my dear father; do not give way to dejection. There was once a man—" "O, dash your parables! keep them for your disciples; they are not too amusing. Alack for the good old times!" "The wicked old times you mean, my father; the times when we were poor, and scorned, and oppressed; the times when heathenism and vain philosophy ruled everywhere in the world. Now, all civilised realms are subject to us, and worship us." "And disobey us. You are very wise, much wiser than your old worn-out father; yet perchance a truth or two comes to me in solitude, when it can't reach you through the press of your saints, and the noise of your everlasting preaching and singing and glorification. You know how I began life, the petty chief of a villainous tribe. But I was passionate and ambitious, subtle and strong-willed, and, in spite of itself, I made my tribe a nation; and I fought desperately against all the surrounding chiefs, and with pith of arm and wile of brain I managed to keep my head above water. But I lived all alone, a stern and solitary existence. None other of the gods was so friendless as I; and it is hard to live alone when memory is a sea of blood. I hated and despised the Greek Zeus and his shameless court; yet I could not but envy him, for a joyous life the rogue led. So I, like an old fool, must have my amour; and a pretty intrigue I got into with the prim damsel Mary! Then a great thought arose in me: men cannot be loyal to utter aliens; their gods must be human on one side, divine on the other; my own people were always deserting me to pay homage to bastard deities. I would adopt you as my own son (between ourselves, I had never been sure of the paternity), and admit you to a share in the government. Those infernal Jews killed you, but the son of a God could not die; you came up hither to dwell with me; I the old absolute king, you the modern tribune of the people. Here you have been ever since; and I don't mind telling you that you were a much more loveable character below there as the man Jesus than you have proved above here as the Lord Christ. As some one was needed on earth to superintend the executive, we created the Comforter, prince royal and plenipotentiary; and behold us a divine triumvirate! The new blood was, I must own, beneficial. We lost Jerusalem, but we won Rome; Jove, Neptune, Apollo, Bacchus, and the rest, were conquered and slain; our leader of the opposition ejected Pluto and Pan. Only I did not bargain that my mistress should more than succeed to Juno, who was, at any rate, a lawful wife. You announced that our empire was peace; you announced likewise that it was war; both have served us. Our power extended, our glory rose; the chief of a miserable tribe has become emperor of Europe. But our empire was to be the whole world; yet instead of signs of more dominion, I see

signs that what we have is falling to pieces. From my youth up I have been a man of war; and now that I am old and weary and wealthy, and want peace, peace flies from me. Have we not shed enough blood? Have we not caused enough tears? Have we not kindled enough fires? And in my empire what am I? Yourself and my mistress share all the power between you; I am but a name at the head of our proclamations. I have been a man of war, I am getting old and worn out, evil days are at hand, and I have never enjoyed life; therefore is my soul vexed within me. And my own subjects are as strangers. Your darling saints I cannot bear. The whimpering, simpering, canting, chanting blockheads! You were always happy in a pious miserableness, and you do not foresee the end. Do you know that in spite of our vast possessions we are as near bankruptcy as Spain or Austria? Do you know that our innumerable armies are a Chinese rabble of cowards and traitors? Do you know that our legitimacy (even if yours were certain) will soon avail us as little as that of the Bourbons has availed them? Of these things you are ignorant: you are so deafened with shouts and songs in your own praise that you never catch a whisper of doom. I would not quail if I had youth to cope with circumstance; none can say honestly that I ever feared a foe; but I am so weak that often I could not walk without leaning on you. Why did I draw out my life to this ignominious end? Why did I not fall fighting like the enemies I overcame? Why the devil did you get born like all, and then murdered by those rascally Jews, that I who was a warrior should turn into a snivelling saint? The heroes of Asgard have sunk into a deeper twilight than they foresaw; but their sunset, fervent and crimson with blood and with wine, made splendid that dawnless gloaming. The joyous Olympians have perished, but they all had lived and loved. For me, I have subsisted and hated. What of time is left to me I will spend in another fashion. Let us eat and drink, for to-morrow we die." And he swallowed hastily a bumper of the wine, which threw him into convulsions of coughing.

Serene and superior the son had let the old man run on. "Do not, I entreat you, take to drink in your old age, dear father. You say that our enemies lived and loved; but think how unworthy of divine rulers was their mode of life, how immoral, how imprudent, how disreputable, how savage, how lustful, how un-Christian! What a bad example for poor human souls!" "Human souls be blessed! Are they so much improved now? . . . Would that at least I had conserved Jove's barmaid; the prettiest, pleasantest girl they say (we know you are a Joseph, though you always had three or four women dangling about you); fair-ankled was the wench, bright-limbed; she might be unto me even as was Abishag, the Shunammite, unto my old friend David." "Let us speak seriously, my father, of the great celebration to-morrow." "And suppose I *am* speaking very seriously, you solemn prig; not a drop of my blood is there in you."

Here came a hurried knocking at the door, and the angelic ministers of state crawled in, with super-elaborate oriental cringeings, to deliver their daily reports. "Messages from Brahma, Ormuzd, etc., to congratulate on the son's birthday." "The infidels! the mockers!" muttered the son. "Good words," said the father; "they belong to older families than ours, my lad, and were once much more powerful. You are always trying to win over the parvenus." "A riot in the holy city. The black angels organised to look after the souls of converted negroes having a free fight with some of the white ones." "My poor lambs!" sighed the son. "Black sheep," growled the father; "what is the row?" "They have plumed themselves brighter than peacocks, and scream louder than parrots; claim precedence over the angels of the mean whites; insist on having some of their own hymns and tunes in the programme of to-morrow's concerts." "Lock 'em all up, white and black, especially the black, till Tuesday morning; they can fight it out then—it's Boxing Day. We'll have quite enough noise to-morrow without 'em. Never understood the nigger question, for my part: was a slave-holder myself, and cursed Ham as much as pork." "New saints grumbling about lack of civilised accommodation: want underground railways, steamers or the crystal sea, telegraph wires to every mansion, morning and evening papers, etc., etc.; have had a public meeting with a Yankee saint in the chair, and resolved that heaven is altogether behind the age." "Confound it, my son, have I not charged you again and again to get some saints of ability up here? For years past every batch has been full of good-for-nothing noodles. Have we no engineers, no editors at all?" "One or two engineers, we believe, sirc, but we can't find a single editor." "Give one of the *Record* fellows the measles,

and an old *l'Univers* hand the cholera, and bring them up into glory at once, and we'll have two daily papers. And while you are about it, see whether you can discover three or four pious engineers—not muffs, mind—and blow them up hither with their own boilers, or in any other handy way. Haste, haste, post haste!" "Deplorable catastrophe in the temple of the New Jerusalem; a large part of the foundation given way, main wall fallen, several hundred workmen bruised." "Stop that fellow who just left; countermand the measles, the cholera will be enough; we will only have one journal, and that must be strictly official. If we have two, one will be opposition. Hush up the accident. It is strange that Pandemonium was built so much better and more quickly than our New Jerusalem!" "All our best architects and other artists have deserted into Elysium, my lord; so fond of the company of the old Greeks."

When these and many other sad reports had been heard, and the various ministers and secretaries savagely dismissed, the father turned to the son and said: "Did I not tell you of the evil state we are in?" "By hope and faith and charity, and the sublime doctrine of self-renunciation, all will yet come right, my father!" "Humph! let hope fill my treasury, and faith finish the New Jerusalem, and charity give us peace and quietness, and self-renunciation lead three-quarters of your new-fangled saints out of heaven; and then I shall look to have a little comfort." "Will you settle to-morrow's programme, sire? or shall I do my best to spare you the trouble?" "You do your best to spare me the trouble of reigning altogether, I think. What programme can there be but the old rehearsal for the eternal life (I wish you may get it)? Oh, that horrible slippery sea of glass, that bedevilled throne vomiting thunders and lightnings, those stupid senile elders in white nightgowns, those four hideous beasts full of eyes, that impossible lamb with seven horns and one eye to each horn! Oh, the terrific shoutings and harpings and stifling incense! A pretty set-out for my time of life! And to think that you hope some time or other to begin this sort of thing as a daily amusement, and to carry it on for ever and ever! Not much appearance of its beginning soon, thank goodness—that is to say, thank badness. Why can't you have a play of Aristophanes, or Shakespeare, or Molière? Why should I meddle with the programme? I had nothing to do with first framing it. Besides, it is all in your honor, not in mine. You like playing the part of the Lamb; I'm much more like an old wolf. You are ravished when those beasts give glory and honor and thanks; as for me, I am utterly sick of them. Behold what I will do; I must countenance the affair, but I can do so without disturbing myself. I'll not go thundering and roaring in my state-carriage of the whirlwind; I'll slip there in a quiet cloud. You can't do without my glory, but it really is too heavy for my aged shoulders; you may lay it upon the throne; it will look just as well. As for my speech, here it is all ready written out; let Mercury, I mean Raphael or Uriel, read it; I can't speak plainly since I lost so many teeth. And now I consider the matter, what need is there for my actual presence at all? Have me there in effigy; a noble and handsome dummy can wear the glory with grace. Mind you have a handsome one; I wish all the artists had not deserted us. Your pious fellows make sad work of us, my son. But then their usual models are so ugly; your saints have good reason to speak of their vile bodies. How is it that all the pretty girls slip away to the other place, poor darlings? By the bye, who are going on this occasion to represent the twelve times twelve thousand of the tribes of Israel? Is the boy Mortara dead yet? He will make one real Jew." "We are converting them, sire." "Not the whole gross of thousands yet, I trust? Faugh! what a greasy stench there would be—what a blazing of Jew jewelry! Hand me the latest blue-book, with the reports. . . . Ah, I see; great success! Power of the Lord Christ! (always *you*, of course). Society flourishing. Eighty-two thousand pounds four shillings and twopence three-farthings last year from Christians aroused to the claims of the lost sheep of the House of Israel. (Very good). Five conversions!! Three others have already been persuaded to eat pork sausages. (Better and better). One, who drank most fervently of the communion wine, suffered himself to be treated to an oyster supper. Another, being greatly moved, was heard to ejaculate, 'O, Christ!' . . . Hum, who are the five? Moses Isaacs: wasn't he a Christian ten years ago in Italy, and afterwards a Mahomedan in Salonica, and afterwards a Jew in Marseilles? This Mussulman is your oyster-man, I presume? You will soon get the one hundred and forty-four thousand at this rate, my son! and cheap too!"

He chuckled, and poured out another glass of *Lachryma Christi*; drank it, made a wry face, and then began coughing furiously. "Poor drink this for a god in his old age. Odin and Jupiter fared better. Though decent for a human tippie, for a divinity it is but *ambroisie stygiale*, as my dear old favorite chaplain would call it. I have his devotional works under lock and key there in my desk. *Apropos*, where is he? Left us again for a scurry through the more jovial regions? I have not seen him for a long time." "My father! really, the words he used, the life he led; so corrupting for the young saints! We were forced to invite him to travel a little for the benefit of his health. The court *must* be kept pure, you know." "Send for him instantly, sir. He is out of favor because he likes the old man and laughs at your saints, because he can't cant and loves to humbug the humbugs. Many a fit of the blues has he cured for me, while you only make them bluer. Have him fetched at once. Oh, I know you never liked him; you always thought him laughing at your sweet pale face and woebegone airs, laughing '*en horrible sarcasme et sanglante derision*' (what a style the rogue has! what makes that of your favorite parsons and holy ones so flaccid and flabby and hectic?) 'Physician, heal thyself!' So, in plain words, you have banished him; the only jolly soul left amongst us, my pearl and diamond and red ruby of chaplains, abstracter of the quintessence of pantagruelism! The words he used! I mustn't speak freely myself now, and the old books I wrote are a great deal too coarse for you! Michael and Gabriel told me the other day that they had just been severely lectured on the earnestness of life by one of your new *protégés*; they had to kick him howling into limbo. A fine set of solemn prigs we are getting!" "My father, the holiness of sorrow, the infiniteness of suffering!" "Yes, yes, I know all about it. That long-winded poet of yours (he does an ode for you to-morrow?) began to sermonise me thereon. By Jupiter, he wanted to arouse me to a sense of my inner being and responsibilities and so forth. I very soon packed him off to the infant school, where he teaches the alphabet and catechism to the babies and sucklings. Have you sent for my jovial, joyous, jolly Curé of Meudon?" "I have; but I deeply regret that your Majesty thinks it fitting to be intimate with such a free-liver, such a glutton and wine-bibber and mocker and buffoon." "Bah! you patronised the publicans and sinners yourself in your younger and better days. The strict ones blamed you for going about eating and drinking so much. I hear that some of your newest favorites object to the wine in your last supper, and are going to insist on vinegar-and-water in future."

Whereupon entered a man of a noble and courtly presence lively-eyed and golden-bearded, ruddy complexioned, clear-browed, thoughtful, yet joyous, serene and unabashed. "Welcome, thrice welcome, my beloved Alcofribas!" cried the old monarch; very long is it since last I saw you." "I have been exiled since then, your Majesty." "And I knew nothing of it!" "And thought nothing of it or of me until you wanted me. No one expects the King to have knowledge of what is passing under his eyes." "And how did you manage to exist in exile, my poor chaplain?" "Much better than here at court, sire. If your Majesty wants a little pleasure, I advise you to get banished yourself. Your parasites and sycophants and courtiers are a most morose, miserable, ugly, detestable, intolerable swarm of blind beetles and wasps; the devils are beyond comparison better company." "What! you have been mixing with traitors?" "Oh, I spent a few years in Elysium, but didn't this time go into the lower circles. But while I sojourned as a country gentleman on the heavenly borders, I met a few contrabandists. I need not tell you that large, yea, enormous quantities of beatitude are smuggled out of your dominions." "But what is smuggled in?" "Sire, I am not an informer; I never received anything out of the secret-service money. The poor angels are glad to run a venture at odd times, to relieve the tedium of everlasting Te Deum. By the bye, I saw *the Devil* himself." "The Devil in my kingdom! What is Uriel about? he'll have to be superannuated." "Bah! your Majesty knows very well that Satan comes in and returns as and when he likes. The passport system never stops the really dangerous fellows. When he honored me with a call he looked the demurest young saint, and I laughed till I got the lockjaw at his earnest and spiritual discourse. He would have taken yourself in, much more Uriel. You really ought to get him on the list of court chaplains. He and I were always good friends, so if anything happens . . . It may be well for you if you can disguise yourself as cleverly as he. A revolution is not quite impossible, you know." The son threw up his hands in pious

horror; the old King, in one of his spasms of rage, hurled the blue-book at the speaker's head, which it missed, but knocked down and broke his favorite crucifix. "Jewey fiction *versus* crucifixion, sire; *magna est veritas et prevalebit!* Thank Heaven, all that folly is *outside* my brains; it is not the first book full of cant and lies and stupidity that has been flung at me. Why did you not let me finish? The Devil is no fonder than your sacred self of the new opinions; in spite of the proverb, he loves and dotes upon holy water. If you cease to be head of the ministry, he ceases to be head of the opposition; he wouldn't mind a change, an innings for him and an outings for you; but these latest radicals want to crush both Whigs and Tories. He was on his way to confer with some of your Privy Council, to organise joint action for the suppression of new ideas. You had better be frank and friendly with him. Public opposition and private amity are perfectly consistent and praiseworthy. He has done you good service before now; and you and your son have always been of the greatest assistance to him." "By the temptation of Job! I must see to it. And now no more business. I am hipped, my Rabelais; we must have a spree. The cestus of Venus, the lute of Apollo, we never could find; but there was sweeter loot in the sack of Olympus, and our cellars are not yet quite empty. We will have a *petit souper* of ambrosia and nectar." "My father! my father! did you not sign the pledge to abstain from these heathen stimulants?" "My beloved son, with whom I am not at all well pleased, go and swill water till you get the dropsy, and permit me to do as I like. No wonder people think that I am failing when my child and my mistress rule for me!"

The son went out, shaking his head, beating his breast, scrubbing his eyes, wringing his hands, sobbing and murmuring piteously. "The poor old God! my dear old father! Ah, how he is breaking! Alack, he will not last long! Verily, his wits are leaving him! Many misfortunes and disasters would be spared us were he to abdicate prudently at once. Or a regency might do. But the evil speakers and slanderers would say that I am ambitious. I must get the matter judiciously insinuated to the Privy Council. Alack! alack!"

"Let him go and try on his suit of lamb's wool for to-morrow," said the old monarch. "I have got out of the rehearsal, my friend; I shall be conspicuous by my absence; there will be a dummy in my stead." "Rather perilous innovation, my Lord; the people may think that the dummy does just as well, that there is no need to support the original." "Shut up, shut up, O my Curé; no more politics—confound our politics! It is Sunday, so we must have none but chaplains here. You may fetch Friar John and sweet Dean Swift and the amiable parson Sterne, and any other godly and devout and spiritual ministers you can lay hold of; but don't bring more than a pleiad." "With Swift for the lost one; he is cooling his 'sæva indignatio' in the Devil's kitchen-furnace just now, comforting poor Addison, who hasn't got quit for his death-bed brandy yet." "A night of devotion will we have, and of inextinguishable laughter; and with the old liquor will we pour out the old libations. Yea, Gargantuan shall be the feast; and this night, and to-morrow, and all next week, and twelve days into the new year the hours shall reel and roar with Pantagruelism. Quick, for the guests, and I will order the banquet!" "With all my heart, sire, will I do this very thing. Parsons and pastors, pious and devout, will I lead back, choice and most elect souls worthy of the old drink delectable. And I will lock and double bolt the door, and first warm the chamber by burning all these devilish books; and will leave word with the angel on guard that we are not to be called for three times seven days, when all these Christmas fooleries and mummeries are long over. Amen. Selah. *Au revoir*. Tarry till I come."

From *Satires and Profanities*.

Cosmogony.

Who made a garden fair to view,
And made a man and woman too,
And placed them there to bill and coo?
Jehovah.

Who made a lot of apple trees,
With fruit, the eye and taste to please,
And said: "Eat those, but don't touch these?"
Jehovah.

Who said—although it was a lie—
"If you on this one cast your eye
And eat of it, you'll surely die?"
Jehovah.

Who made a Devil, strong and sly,
To spoil with Truth Jehovah's lie
And say: "That apple's all my eye?"
Jehovah.

Who heard "old Nick" and Eve debate,
And watched, but helped not—said to state—
Till Eve the apple plucked and ate?
Jehovah.

Who said to Adam, when he fell:
"You've booked yourself, and Eve as well,
And all your children straight for hell?"
Jehovah.

Who spoiled creation in his spite;
And made his children hate and fight;
And all in blood to take delight?
Jehovah.

Who turned bright Hope to shudd'ring Fright;
The kiss of Love to Hatred's bite;
And strengthened Might and weakened Right?
Jehovah.

Who taught the Lion how to cram
His cruel jaws with tender lamb?
Who cared for suff'ring not one damn?
Jehovah.

Who looked as black as London mud,
And swore to quench his rage in blood,
Ev'n if he had to drink a flood?
Jehovah.

Who said: "I'll split myself in three,
And nail a part upon a tree,
And go in for phlebotomy?"
Jehovah.

If this be true it's not a lie;
So reader, you must "mind your eye;"
For if you don't you'll be damned by
Jehovah.

G. L. MAC.

Dod Grile's Sermon.

BELOVED BRETHREN:—The text we have selected for your edification to-day may be found in 2 Samuel xxiv., 24: "So David bought the threshing-floor and the oxen for fifty shekels of silver." There is not, my fellow-travellers to the bar of God, a passage in the whole Bible so pregnant with truth, as we shall presently see. Let us review the circumstances which led to this purchase of real estate.

David had decided to number his people, or rather the army he had long commanded. Generals at the present day know pretty nearly how many men they have under them, but David's ways were not Grant's ways. He had two reasons for numbering them. First, the Devil incited him thereto, as we learn from 1 Chronicles xxi., 1: "And Satan stood up against Israel, and provoked David to number Israel." Secondly, he was *not* incited thereto by the Devil, as will appear from 2 Samuel xxiv., 1: "And again the angel of the Lord was kindled against Israel, and he moved David against them to say, Go number Israel and Judah." This statement, which so plainly supports that just cited, is itself verified by James i., 13: "Let no man say when he is tempted, I am tempted of God; for God cannot be tempted with evil, neither tempteth he any man."

So David took the census of his people; and we learn in 2 Samuel xxiv., 9, "there were in Israel eight hundred thousand valiant men that drew the sword; and the men of Judah were five hundred thousand"—thirteen hundred thousand in all. This is corroborated by 1 Chron. xxi., 5, where the total is given as fourteen hundred and seventy thousand.

Now, the Lord was justly angry with David for doing this thing, and slew seventy thousand of his people; and I say unto you, it served them right. The Lord doeth all things well. But David began to be ashamed of his part of the transaction, and said unto the Lord: "I have sinned and done wickedly; but these sheep, what have they done?" So then the good Lord desisted from the slaughter; blessed be the name of the Lord! But to further appease his wrath, David bought a threshing-floor, whereon to erect an altar. In 2 Sam. it was purchased from Araunah, and in 1 Chron., from Ornan. And this brings us to our text: "So David bought the threshing-floor and the oxen for fifty shekels of silver." If under the droppings of my sanctuary there sits any unhalloved estate-agent who doubts that in those early days land could bring so high a price at private sale, let him consult 1 Chron. xxi., 25: "So David gave to Ornan for the place six hundred shekels of gold by weight."

Brethren, let us prey!

Priestcraft Exposed.

How the parson must laugh in his sleeve,
 With what pleasure his heart must be skippin',
 When he tells us that Adam and Eve
 Damn'd us all for a fine golden pippin!
 And how Cain, too, somehow found a wife—
 Tho' the story I'll own somewhat odd is—
 When to Nod he'd to run for his life,
 And he there got a nation of noddies.

When he talks about angels and such—
 Fine fellows we all must allow—
 I feel I should like very much
 To meet with those gentlefolk now.
 If he tells me they're all of them dead,
 So my brains I've no need to be troublin',
 I'll tell him he lies, to his head,
 For the Devil's alive, and in Dublin!

How Moses was dragged from a ditch—
 That prince of impostors of old;
 He deserved to be burned like a witch
 If one half is but true that we're told!
 He a camel turned into a flea
 By the help of his magical rod;
 And went dry through the midst of the sea—
 Now that is a good'un, by God!

How Samson, that quarrelsome fellow,
 Slew a thousand men with a jawbone;
 And to vex 'em, one night when quite mellow,
 Ran off with the gates of the town.
 Their foxes he tied by the tails,
 Tho' the devil a fox was e'er there;
 Their windmills too went without sails,
 And their castles were built in the air.

Little David killed giant Goliath—
 With a stone and a sling took his life;
 Then he murdered his friend, poor Uriah,
 For the sake of his beautiful wife.
 Then his son too was fond of the fair ones,
 Like his gallant old father before;
 Of tall ones and fat ones and spare ones
 He got him a thousand or more.

How a stupid old fellow of Uz
 Was cursed with a stupid old wife;
 But so stupid's the tale, how it was
 I cannot make out for my life.
 Old Nick, it seems, owed him a spite,
 And played him some devilish rigs—
 Sent a legion of devils one night,
 Who played hell with the poultry and pigs.

But this is no more than a farce
 To other fine things that they tell ye;
 For one had a speaking jackass
 And another lived in a whale's belly.
 With lions some lived in a den,
 And others in furnaces frying;
 But, heaven preserve us, some men
 Are so cursedly given to lying.

Elijah rode up to the moon
 In a chariot all flaming with fire;
 But Enoch, one fine afternoon,
 Flew a hundred and fifty times higher.
 Elisha's two bears, it is said,
 Ate forty poor boys at a time,
 For just calling the fellow bald-head.
 Now, that *was* a terrible crime.

Captain Joshua called to the sun
 To stand still; so it did sure enough—
 But I think it's high time to have done
 Repeating such old woman's stuff.
 For when with this nonsense you're crammed,
 To make you believe it all true
 They'll say if you don't you'll be d-m-ned,
 But you ought to be damned if you do.

—Oracle of Reason, 1843.

ONE of the converted darkies living in Alapaha recently got happy over his religious prospects, and, jumping up from his seat, astonished the good brethren and sisters by shouting: "Glory to God! I's redeemed, and I don't care a d—n who knows it!"

A STUPID clergyman was tried for some offence before Justice Green, but was acquitted. Reading out to his congregation on the first Sunday after his release from Job xxxix., 5, he said in a voice loud and clear: "Who hath sent out the wild ass free?" Judge Green," sharply replied an irreverent young man,"

Full Report of the Last Supper.

[PREFATORY NOTE.—It may be advisable to explain the circumstances under which the following account is made public. On April 1, 1884, a very dirty Jew called upon me, and offered for sale a dilapidated skin, upon which certain mystic characters were written. He said he had formerly been in partnership with the celebrated Shapira, but had quarrelled with "Old Shap" (as he familiarly styled him), and had taken possession of his share of the stock-in-trade and had commenced business on his own account. I reminded him of the bogus character of "Old Shap's" wares, and frankly expressed my suspicions as to the genuineness of the article he desired me to purchase. He earnestly assured me that there was no deception, and at length I agreed to buy the skin for five shillings and an old hat. After fumigating my treasure, I took it to the learned Professor Bouncer, who has kindly furnished me with a translation of its contents. The light thrown by it upon the Gospel story is so valuable that I venture to publish it. The skin was a portion of a public record—similar in style and scope to our modern newspaper—in which events of general interest were noticed. The evidential value of this testimony will be obvious. Without further preface I proceed to give Professor Bouncer's translation.—HEINRICH SCHWEINKOPF.]

FAREWELL SUPPER TO JOSHUA JOSEPHSON.—Last evening a supper was given at the "Golden Crown" Tavern, High Street, Jerusalem, by a few of the friends of Joshua Josephson, the well known conjuror and entertainer, who will shortly leave town for an extended tour in the provinces. The caterer for the occasion was Solomon Isaacs, of Bethany Street, who provided for the company in his usual excellent style. Fourteen gentlemen sat down to table and partook with evident gusto of the substantial meal provided for them. Joshua was in high spirits, and apparently none the worse for his recent unpleasantness with the authorities. The only circumstance that to some extent affected the company was the late suicide of one of their friends, Mr. Iscariot, whose death, under highly dramatic circumstances, was reported in this journal.

When due justice had been done to the supper, SIMON KEPHAS rose to propose the health of their guest. In the course of an eloquent speech he referred to the public career of his friend Joshua as a thought-reader, conjuror and miracle-worker. The raising of Lazarus after he had been dead three days—a feat which none of his numerous rivals had succeeded in imitating—marked their friend Joshua as indisputably the leading man in the profession. (Hear, hear.) His constant good nature and kindly disposition had endeared him to those with whom he had come into contact; and he (Simon Kephas) was sure that he was expressing the feeling of all present when he wished their friend Joshua all success in his provincial tour. Referring for a moment to the absence of Judas, he would remark that the untimely death of that gentleman was not very much to be regretted. The deceased was a "bad lot," and had borrowed two skekels from him (Simon Kephas), but had never repaid him. In conclusion, he begged to propose the toast: "Health and Prosperity to Joshua Josephson."

The toast was drunk standing, amidst the greatest enthusiasm. We regret to be obliged to add that two gentleman who had imbibed too freely of the landlord's generous liquor disappeared under the table when they tried to resume their seats.

JOSHUA JOSEPHSON, in responding to the toast, said he could hardly find words to express his grateful appreciation of the kindly sentiments that had been expressed and endorsed that evening. For some years they had known him both publicly and privately, and, though he could not pretend to deserve all the good words that had been spoken of him by his friend Simon Kephas, yet he might claim that he had—despite the slanders which were the penalty of success—conducted himself honorably. He had never cheated at Nap, had never stolen his neighbor's property (for that affair of the donkey had been maliciously misrepresented) and in following his avocation as a public conjuror and entertainer, he had always endeavored to promote the interests of the profession by careful and painstaking performances. His last and most celebrated effort, the "Resurrection" (the copyright for which had been secured) would, he felt sure, be an extremely attractive feature in his programme. He had arranged to commence his provincial engagements at the Town Hall, Joppa, in a fortnight's time, and would keep his friends advised of his movements. He thanked them most heartily for their kind reception, and trusted that when he returned to Jerusalem for the winter season he should find them all well and prosperous. (Loud and prolonged cheering.)

After the conclusion of the speeches several songs were sung by various gentlemen, and Matthew gave a masterly performance on the Jew's harp. The party was very convivial, and did not separate until an early hour this morning. Mr. Josephson leaves town to-morrow for Joppa, and is advertised to reappear in Jerusalem with a novel and attractive programme on Kiskler 8th.

A TERRIBLY prosaic lady friend was discanting to Lamb on the merits of a favorite pastor. "I know him well, sir," she said; "he is a complete saint—he is a heaven-blessed man." "Well, maru," at last cried Charles, "I d-d-don't know him; but d-d-damn him, at a ventura!"

Creation Pantomime of Adam and Eve; OR, HARLEQUIN KING PIPPIN, A DEVIL WHO WOULD NOT DIS-EVE.

[Written by "Scoffer" for Publican Booth, for production at the Royal Grecian Theatre on Boxing Day.]

SCENE—Total darkness; unearthly noises, roaring of wind, etc., etc.

VOICE: I'm awful tired of having nought to do,
I've idle been a million year or two;
Therefore at last I've quite made up my mind
Some nice employment for myself to find.
I'll make a world—at least I'll have a try,
Although my first attempt may not be "fly."
So to commence—"Let there be light," I say;
No *Brush* ones, or I'll sweep them clean away.

(*aside*) Although their pious chairman takes my part,
He won't upon my custom make a start.

(*Bright light appears. Jova seen in balloon midway of stage. Mud floor. No sky.*)

Ah, that's the style. With folks I'll have some fun,
They'll never gas how light precedes the sun.
Now let the firm-I-meant appear—*Reckitt's*. You
Azure sky of me, of him you azure blue.

(*Jova ascends in balloon; produces box of blue; paints sky. Balloon descends to ground.*)

Now on this mud I think I'll try my hand,
Pick out the bits of dry and call them land—
My angels have been using it for mortar,
This first edition of our *Land and Water*.
And what is left might well be called an ocean—
Rivers and lakes to make I haven't yet a notion.
I'll leave such fiddling work for other folk;
Though straining off this mud is no bad joke.

(*Jova strains off mud with collander.*)

Methinks I now deserve a little ease;
After a rest I'll make herbs, grass and trees.
In the meantime, as none can raise objection,
A song I'll sing on "Free Trade and Protection."

(*Jova sings. Then starts work again. Trees and herbs come through trap-doors during song.*)

Piano songs should be in this *Broad-wood*,
Which has appeared for evil or for good;
I'm *Moore and Moore* inclined to think there'll be
Some sad misfortune happen thro' that tree.

(*Points to apple-tree.*)

Well, now I trow its not a bit too soon
For fixing up the sun, the stars and moon.

(*Balloon ascends. Jova fixes them.*)

Birds, beasts and fishes next I'll make—
Kippers, cows, pigs, duck and drake.
The names of every kind I cannot mention:
Such work, I think, requires too much attention.

(*Birds, beast and fish appear, and dance off in pairs. Jova dances off. Fairies appear. Grand Ballet. Exit fairies.*)

Enter **JOVA**: Now for the crowning feature of my plan—
An image of myself to make, and call him man.
(*Commences to make a man.*)

Ha, ha! it won't be long before he's made,
Yet to put life in him I'm half afraid.
Perhaps he'll think I'm nothing but a sham,
And care not for a God like me A-dam.
No doubt he'll merely treat me as a neighbor
After this six days' devilish hard labor.

Here goes! I'll take the chance of future woos,
And just kneel down and breathe into his nose.

(*Jova breathes into Adam's nostrils. Soft music. Adam sneezes; moves legs and arms. Hits Jova. Business. Eats grass.*)

JOVA: Stand up, you eldest son of wind and mud.
I don't intend that you shall chow the cud!
(*Adam stands up. Sings "Nobody's Child" and dances.*)

JOVA: Leave off that row! 'Tis not the time for mirth:
Reserve it for the anniversary of your birth.

ADAM: I feel so fresh and lively I scarce know what to do;
I'll celebrate my birthday now if it makes no odds to you.
(*Adam gives sand-dance. Jova joins in.*)

JOVA: That's enough. List while I give you some instruction,
And to these animals I've made, give you an introduction.
(*Animals reappear.*)

You'll have to name this lot, and choose one for a wife
Who'll eat, sleep and be with you for life.

ADAM: Good God! I'd much prefer to live alone;
Can't I have flesh of my flesh, bone of bone?

JOVA: A happy thought—my noddle's got a plan;
Out with a rib and make a nice woo-man!

ADAM: I'll woo and win her—she shall be my wife.

JOVA: I bet a "sov" she'll cause you lots of strife.

ADAM: As I've no clothes to wear, my dear old fellow,
I'd best be measured for a new umbrella.

JOVA: No, no; stop here. Just smell what's in this vial.

(*Adam smells.*)

(*aside*) He's going off to sleep. Ah! that's the style.

(*Adam snores.*)

A novice at dis-sex-tion I shall make,
But I must do 't before this chap can wake.

(*Jova takes out a rib.*)

Now with this bone I'll go behind the scene,
And make a sweet young girl about seventeen.

(*Exit Jova with bone. Adam sleeps on. Fairies appear. Grand ballet. Exit Fairies. Enter Eve, singing "Only a Pansy Blossom." Adam awakes during song.*)

ADAM: O, what a lovely creature of my rib he's made!
To introduce myself I'm quite afraid,

Enter **JOVA**: Don't be so bashful, Adam. (*to Eve*) Here, sweet Eve!
Kiss Adam, dear, before I take my leave. (*They kiss.*)
Now you two are united, man and wife;
Mind, no divorce! The question's not yet rife.

(*Sings—"If I (k) New men (I) all would happy be." etc.*)

JOVA: So if you fight and quarrel, and each other do not suit,
You still must live together, tho' the stronger acts the brute.

ADAM: O, we shall be all right. Keep your angel chaps away—
Those fellows, when we're out, with our wives pretend to pray.

EVE: Oh, my! he's getting jealous. Don't be a softy, dear;
I won't attend confession—nor for All-Night Meetings care.

JOVA: Now you both must come with me and your home to you I'll
show;

It's a Garden I call Eden, where the best of fruit-trees grow
(*Jova dances off; followed by Adam and Eve. Tune "Over the Garden Wall." Scene changes—Garden of Eden.*)

EVE: O what a lovely place! We can live here at our ease.

ADAM: That's true, dear. Don't you twig the fruit upon the trees?

JOVA: You may eat of all the trees except the one that's here—
(*points to apple tree*)

(*aside*) It is the Tree of Knowledge, and 'tis knowledge that I fear.
The Devil put that one there; and he wants to thwart my plan,
And make the Lord no learner than any common man.

(*To Adam and Eve*)

Understand, whate'er you do, don't touch one little apple,
Or you'll never hear the last of it in school, or church or chapel.

(*Jova, Adam and Eve sing topical song.*)

As I've been on this creation job six days, and almost seven,
To-morrow I must rest, so I'll fetch my "togs" from heaven.

(*Exit singing "Where are my Sunday clothes?"*)

(*Adam and Eve dance. King Pippin comes through trap-door; joins in dance. Knocks Adam in the mouth.*)

ADAM: O gums, he nearly knocked out my front tooth.

PIP: 'Twas purely acci-dental, noble youth.
You know not who I am: so I'll explain—
Redistribution of Seats they want in every train—

ADAM: You come from Underground; but I cannot clearly see
What that question has to do with your own pedigree.

PIP: Well, I'm like the Franchise Bill—they've thrown me from the
Lords,

Because danger to the throne it sure will lead towards.

They wish to keep you ignorant—that's why Jova wants not ye
To eat the fruit—(that's have the vote)—just hanging on that
tree.

ADAM: As agricultural lab'rors are the first workmen of note,
They must be shorn no longer of their birth-right—the vote.

PIP: I like your pluck, so pluck an apple from that tree.

EVE: I'll eat with Adam—'cause I know he'll get the vote for me.
(*Adam and Eve eat apples.*)

PIP: Now on questions that concern you, true knowledge you'll
secure;

I trust you'll vote against Royal Grants and every unjust war
(*Exit Pippin.*)

(*Adam and Eve sing, "There are one or two Reforms that we require."*)
(*Enter Jova in rage.*)

JOVA: You've munched the fruit of that accursed tree,
And on a level now you'll be with me.
Out from my Garden! you shan't my castle view.
No picnics will I give such "scum" as you.

ADAM: We want no bribes—give us our share of land;
Or pay a heavy tax to do the grand.

Enter **PIPPIN**:

That tree of Knowledge wisdom soon has taught.

ADAM and EVE:

And Wisdom's sure to lead us to Freethought.

GRAND TRANSFORMATION SCENE.

Harlequinade:—Clown, Mr. J. C.; Pantaloon, Mr. G.; Harlequin,
Mr. H. G.; Columbine, Miss V. M.; Sprite, Mr. D.; Policeman, "mov'nig
them on," Mr. G. W. F.

Amazin' Grace in Montana.

THERE has been a religious awakening in Montana. The inhabitants are "quicken'd in the spirit of their minds." According to the *St. Paul Herald*, a minister out there has received a call in the following manner:—The other day a St. Paul minister answered a ring at his door-bell, and found there a brawny frontiersman, wearing a buckskin suit and a white Mexican sombrero. He was invited into the study, and, after seating himself, said: "Pardner, I'm tryin' to ease up a sky-pilot to ladle out the savin' grace to the boys in Rawson's Gulch, Montanny. The bar-keeper down to the Merchants' Hotel told me you slung about the heftiest jay in the holy line in St. Paul, an' I thought I'd drop in an' size you up." "If I understand you, sir, you desire to secure a pastor for your church out there." "That's our little game exactly, pard; and the boys constooted me an executive committee to come in 'yar an' run one down. We want the best heavenly mouth-piece in the country, an' we've got the dust to put up fur 'im." "Who was your last pastor?" asked the minister. "Never had one. You see, the boys out thar never stood in much on the religious racket, but we're a-goin' to bank big on savin' grace in the future, an' play 'er clear up to the limit. Glad tidin's o' great joy's the winnin' card at Rawson's from now, henceforth and for evermore, pard, an' don't you forgit it!" "You say you never had a minister? What, then, has caused this sudden awakening—this new desire for light?" "I'll tell you, pard. It's just like this. Thar's a big rivalry atween Rawson's Gulch an' Rocky Bar, about five miles furdur up the creek. The two camps hev been fightin' fur the lead fur a year, an' we've allers drowned 'em on every pint. Las' week one o' the boys went up thar an' come

back an' reported that the Rocky fellers had a preacher, an' that salvation were a runnin' loose in the camp, an' amaz' grace were growin' on the bushes. He said he heard the holy bloke preachify 'imself, an' that he dished up the livin' word like a ten times winner. Wal, that sort o' paralysed us, so to speak, an' we called a meetin' to see what war' to be done. At fust it war' perposed to go up thar of a Sunday an' clean out the congregation an' hang the preacher, but we wa'n't quite sure of the fightin' abilities o' the meek an' lowly worshippers up thar, an' mout get licked; so it war' finally decided to tree a gospel sharp, an' that's what I'm yar fur now. The boys'll treat you white, pardner, an' if you can do up the Rocky Barcapper in the heavenly game, an' put it all over 'im a-soundin' the glad tidin's, yer fortune's made. I like the cut o' yer jib, pard, an' I b'lieve you'd shout salvation at us in a way that'd make the Rocky Bar galoots pow'ful weary." "What denomination is in the majority out there?" "None at all. You kin play yer cards to suit yerself, an' come at us jest as you think the hand ought to be played. But say, pard, I reckon I wouldn't ever give the boys a Baptist lay out to play up to." "Why not?" "Wal, you see, we ain't much stuck on water out thar, only from a business pint o' view. Water's all good enough an' mighty valuable for washin' out dust, but aside from that 'tain't much account. Still, if that's yer lay, pardner, come right along. We'll take turns an' keep you baptisin' half the time, jest to down them Rocky fellers. Thar's a gang o' twenty Chinamen workin' a placer claim below us, an' we kin run them up an' let you soucetha hull mob two or three times a week, if it'll make the Rocky crowd think the good work's a movin' right along." The minister was forced to decline the call, and the old man said as he rose to go: "All right, pardner; no harm done. I'll keep up the hunt till I tree my man. We'll down Rocky Bar on salvation if it's in the pins. Good day, sir; and if you ever come out our way, stop off an' give us a little wad o' off-hand redeemin' grace, an' we'll treat you squar'. Good bye."

The Parson's Call.

(A TRUE TALE).

'Tis known, at least it should be, that the priests
Have too much influence o'er the mind of ladies:
A set of crawling, cheating, skulking beasts—
A compound of all villainies their trade is.
Cloaking with hypocritical grimaces
Their canting, crafty, "come to Jesus" faces;
And much inclined—the fact is quite notorious—
With other persons' wives to be uxorious.

I mean those of the Catholic persuasion.
Since our sky-pilots are allowed to marry,
They need not, like their Savior, have occasion
In single blessedness on earth to tarry.
And knowing nought of methods scientific,
Our parson's wives are usually prolific.
Since Popish priests are to have brides above,
Below they never—hardly ever—fall in love.

Which of these plans is better, or is worse,
I leave each moral reader to decide.
For my part, I declare myself averse
To waiting till I'm dead to get a bride.
Soft flesh, warm blood, are surely nicer articles
Than formless, senseless, spiritual particles.
And flesh and blood can never enter heaven,
(See Paul, Corinthians One, fifteen and forty-seven).

In heaven we ne'er shall see a pretty face;
We'll have no lips, a loving wife to kiss,
No arms around a darling's waist to place,
No smiles or tender looks of dreamy bliss;
No female voice whose music can entrance,
No little children on one's knees to dance,
No beaming eyes whose brightness like an arrow
Shoots through the heart, as boys would shoot a sparrow.

But to my tale. A man of God one day,
(Hosea Gabriel Tupper was his name)
Resolved a friendly visit he would pay
Unto a certain buxom married dame;
Of course he did not venture in his snout
Till pretty sure the husband would be out.
He wished to read to her the Song of Solomon,
Whose wisdom he had written many a column on.

She happened then to be engaged on pie,
Her husband being pie-ously inclined
Although a Freethinker—so she was by
The flour-tub, and his visit did not mind.
He said that he was grieved (the old deceiver)
To find her yoked unto an unbeliever,
And with a view her morals to be blinding
Declared God thought such marriages not binding.

The parson had but time to thus begin
With pious views her mind to inoculate,
When up she took her heavy rolling pin
And struck him hard upon his holy pate;
Then o'er his saintly shoulders in a shower
She flung a lump of dough with lots of flour.
Hosea thought it time that he was trippin',
When at his head there came a jar of drippin'.

Just then the husband entered, and his feet
Were stoutly shod in boots with iron tips.
Expectant he his faithful wife to greet
With the accustomed kiss on loving lips.
But seeing at a glance the situation,
He to the parson's woes gave aggravation
By kicking him most soundly on the place
Which Jahveh turned to Moses for his face.

LUCIANUS.

Profane Conundrums.

WHAT sweetmeat had they in the ark?—Preserved pairs.
WAS Eve High or Low Church?—Adam thought her Eve-angelical.

WHY are free sittings in church very immoral?—Because you are then made good—for nothing.

WHAT chapels are ladies fondest of going to?—The chapel of he's (ease).

WHY should you not go to church if you have a cough?—Because you would disturb the rest of the congregation.

WHY are bishops like superannuated washerwomen?—Because they wear lawn-dresses (were laundresses).

WHY can no clergyman have a wooden leg?—Because a minister is not a lay man (lame'un).

WHAT is the difference between a Roman Catholic priest and a Baptist?—One uses wax candles, the other dips.

WHY was Balaam like a life-guardsman?—Because he went about with a queer ass (cuirass).

In what tongue did Balaam's ass speak?—Probably in he-bray-ic (Hebraic).

WHAT is the first and only instance on record of a fruit speaking?—When the apple damned the pair (pear).

WHEN did David sleep five in a bed?—When he slept with his forefathers.

WHEN is a policeman like a good Samaritan?—When he comes out of some area (Samaria).

WHAT is the difference between Noah's Ark and Joan of Arc?—One was made of wood, the other was Maid of Orleans.

WHAT toe would you rather kiss than the Pope's?—Mrs. Beecher's Stowe.

WHY is Isaiah the greatest of prophets?—Because he never met hiz ekal (Ezekiel).

In what respect was the Roman Catholic religion superior to the Protestant?—The former had a Wise-man at its head, the latter only one Cumming.

WHEN is it dangerous to enter a church?—When there is a canon in the reading desk, a great gun in the pulpit, and a bishop charges the congregation.

Rib Ticklers.

A MUSIC-SELLER who was asked if he had Rossini's "Moses in Egypt," replied, "No, but he had 'Aaron on the Rhine.'"

AUNTY: "Do you say your prayers in the morning too, Johnny?" Johnny, scornfully: "Of course I don't. Anybody can take care of himself in the day-time."

TEACHER: "Who reigned after Saul?" Little Bessie: "David." "And who came after David?" "Solomon." "And who came after Solomon?" "The Queen of Sheba."

"WELL, to tell the truth, papa, I did not think much of the close of the sermon," said a fashionable young lady. "Probably you were thinking more of the clothes of the congregation," replied her father.

A JUVENILE inquirer was looking at some of those pictures of angels in which only heads and wings are visible, and, after a few minutes' reflection, he gave expression to his thoughts as follows: "Well, mamma, how do they sit down?"

AN ill-tempered pastor was preaching to his congregation while a dog was barking outside. This interrupted his sermon so often that he lost his temper while reading out, and quoted a text from Exodus xiv. in the following fashion:—"And the Lord spoke unto Moses, saying—Why the Devil don't someone silence that dog!"

THE other Sunday Barnum's wife got him to go to church, where, early in the proceedings, he fell asleep. The minister was reading the 1st chapter of the Book of Ezekiel. As he proceeded in the description of the wonderful beast which the prophet saw in the land of the Chaldeans, Barnum moved uneasily in his seat. "Every one had four faces, and every one four wings." He rubbed his eyes, and the preacher went on—"And they had the hands of a man under their wings on their four sides, and they four had their faces and their wings." Barnum was now wide awake. "As for the likeness of their faces, they four had the face of a man and the face of a lion on the right side, and they four had the face of an ox on the left side. They four also had the face of an eagle." Barnum was now standing up, his wife vainly pulling at his coat tails. "Name your own price," he cried, disregarding the marital entreaty. "I will take the thing."

The Deluge; or, Wicked Teetoto.

Lo! and behold! in the measureless heavens Jahveh sat on his great white throne. And behold! the Lord bawled out in all the glory of his gigantic voice—"Teetoto!" Whereupon there issued from the far-off sapphire distance the figure of a great angel upon a great green ass. And the face of the ass was white, but its eyes were green; and its body was all of a verdant hue, and the figure—he that sat thereon—was clad in greenness too; and there came from him and his steed the smell of unpolluted waters, and in a voice that was as the sound of a babbling brook, he cried, after he had saluted the Lord by bowing so low, even from the back of his ass, that the nose of the beast and his own green nasal territory met in sweet communion, he cried, with a strong Niagara accent: "The Lord called Teetoto; he is here!" Then the eyelids of the Lord's left eye clapped themselves together in a wink that set all heaven in a holy roar, and the Lord said: "Teetoto, thou knowest the world that I made, to wit, the earth?"

And Teetoto answered: "I know it! Ah!" and his ass brayed as if to say: "And so likewise do I."

Then said the Lord, "Thy knowledge is exceedingly great, O Teetoto. Now tell me this: How much water have we in our celestial cistern?" And Teetoto said: "Nine hundred and ninety-nine million million millions."

"Good!" ejaculated the Lord. "Then listen. This world that I have made has turned out to be a rather dry affair, so I'm going to wet it. These men are developing into devils; and I'm sorry I ever made them. In fact, they are too bad, and want damning so fast that it keeps my hands full; and Hades, too, will be full at the rate they're at present hastening thither. So worthy Teetoto, I have bethought me of a plan, which my infinite wisdom tells me is better than the present state of affairs. I intend to drown all the world! In short, I don't intend to let any straggling devil keep his head above water. It is done! Thou knowest the rest!"

And the Lord shot a glance from his infinite eye straight into the eye of Teetoto; and Teetoto immediately comprehended what was to be done. Then there was a mighty stir in heaven and forth from the ranks of those sentenced to penal servitude for eternal life, rushed a man with a harp under his arm, and a big red apple on his throat, and he said, falling on his knees before the immaculate white-washed throne: "O good Jahveh! Consider a little, they are my children; the Devil is to blame for all their sin, not them. It's the Devil that thou shouldst destroy. O God! O God! O —"

"Take him away!" screamed the King of Soulland. "Take him away, and confine him in the darkest cell, with nothing but a Bible for company." And the Lord chuckled an exceeding pious chuckle, and all the cherubim and seraphim chuckled too; but the man cried, "O God, don't do it; forgive —"

"I tell you," said the Lord—and a diabolical grin of cruel humor played on his countenance—"I tell you; so how much you plead it doesn't matter A-dam!"

At hearing this eternal and old joke, which the Lord often amused himself by making, our common father (for he it was) fell into an uncommon swoon, and in that state was removed away to one of the holy dungeons.

Then the Lord yelled, "O, Teetoto, do thy work."

And Teetoto worked, and he opened the windows of heaven, and the rain rushed out thereat, and it fell on the earth, the inhabitants of which were not prepared, all except one man whose name was Noah, and his family. And he had built an ark according to instructions from the Lord. And there was one window in this ark for ventilation—one little window, and the ventilation thereof was perfect. This ark was the first menagerie ever formed and the biggest. It was a floating altar of incense to the Lord, for the smell thereof was exceeding delicious. And I, the writer of this, inspired by the Lord, saw the scene as indeed it was. For unto a prophet the Lord gives great imagination, and there is no lack of conceit. And I beheld, even I saw, that the heavens were dark, and the angel Teetoto was busy on high and floods were upon the face of the earth. And there arose wild cries of despair from drowning cities, and the dead floated about before the eyes of the terrified living, the relentless wave snatched the babe from its mother's arms and stifled its innocent cries in the roar of Almighty wrath, and the wife was snatched from her husband's side. The lame and the blind and the old were embraced by the pitiless waters, and all perished. And Jahveh sat on his throne with a smile and cried, "Well done, O Teetoto!" And all the hosts of heaven shouted "Hallelujah!" And the souls of the drowned came crowding in great number at the gate of heaven by hundreds to the minute; and the Lord cried, "Out upon ye, ye fallen race, ye easily duped, out upon ye; to hell with you and dry yourselves, for I think you are wet enough now."

And heaven rang with applause at Jahveh's wit, while over the golden battlements there came the wail of a sad lost world. And so it rained, and forty days went by, and the tops of the highest hills were covered. Yet the ark rode in safety.

WITTIWON.

TEACHER: "What is meant by the almighty hand?" Pupil: "Four asses"

A Bible with Advertisements.

A NOTED advertising firm are about to issue a penny edition of God's Holy Word, with advertisements on the top of each page. It will probably read in the following manner:—

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<i>Smithfield Cattle Show—</i>	Beasts full of Eyes.
<i>Use Borwick's Baking Powder—</i>	Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego.

Fragments that Remain.

THE Macca-bees were not *Hivites*, although they were natives of the land described as overflowing with milk and honey.

A CLASS was being examined on the story of the Flood. Among the first questions put was this—"How did Noah understand that there was going to be a flood?" "'Cause he looked at his almanac!" shouted a boy.

IN an old-fashioned church in Philadelphia the choir roosts in the gallery above the pulpit, and the pastor is seriously contemplating resignation if the men and women singers do not cease their careless habit of dropping nut-shells down on his bald head while he is preaching.

To Correspondents.

RECEIVED.—"Go to the Devil," by the author of "Come to Jesus," "The Fire-King Business," by Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego.

HABAKKUK.—If your prophetic paroxysms recur you had better consult a physician.

GABRIEL.—According to Deut. xxii, 23-24, both you and the damsel should be stoned to death.

SOLOMON.—You have sent your stale maxims and obscene love verses to the wrong quarter. Try the *Rock*.

J. NORTH.—When Jonah was "sore afraid" he treated himself to some of Holloway's ointment.

SAMMY.—It is not incumbent on you to believe the lies of every parson; in-a-curacy is their hobby.

Y. M. C. A.—If you and your Christian friends wish to perform the "Creation Pantomime," ask permission of Booth—the artist who manages the Grecian.

JOSH EWER.—Did you really make the sun stand still? Who would believe such an absurd story but your poor old father—Nun.

GOAL LATI.—Although our paragraphs make sport of theology we cannot call them Foote-Ball Items. Wheelor-tend to the other matter.

BIBLE-FACE.—Paying a rate to support a vicar is of course a vicarious sacrifice on our part. One of these days that vicar will have to be content with a few back numbers.

SCPTIC.—Get the N. S. S. Almanac; it is full of Secular information You will be sorry each page does not 'Old Moore.

VOICE FROM HEAVEN.—Giving concerts on Sundays is illegal, even if no charge is made at the door. You are all liable to a-rest. Of course we all have our crochelets.

JOLLY WAGNER.—You well describe the music of the waits as Rough Notes before Daybreak.

S. COFFER.—Your sketch of Judge North's dream arrived too late. No doubt he imagines himself safe for a front seat in heaven for putting us in prison. But it's only a dream.

OTAS TITE thinks that heretic hunters use to live at Kil-burn. If Queen Anne had heard of this it would have Maida Hill.

CERBERUS.—1. A three-headed dog like yourself, with good sharp teeth, ought to be able to settle matters with J. C. or his father for the insult to the canine race in Deut. xxiii, 18. 2. We sympathise with you in your righteous complaint against the Triune Christian God for infringing your patent. Perhaps St. Anselm's tract on "Cur Deus Homo" might throw some light on the matter. 3. The correct version we think must be—

Let Gods delight to bark and bite,
For man hath made them so;
Like bears and lions let them fight,
For 'tis their nature to.
And Christians, you must often let
Your pious passions rise;
Your consecrated hands were made
To tear each other's eyes.

ADAM'S TAILOR.—Thanks for cuttings, or "cabbage," as you call them, although you turn your nose up at vegetables. OWING to press of matter we are reluctantly compelled to leave a comma over until next Christmas.

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