

1886.

Price Threepence.

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THE CHRISTMAS TREE-THUNDERER
OF THE
TREE-THUNDERER

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THE CHRISTMAS NUMBER
OF
THE FREETHINKER

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EDITED BY G. W. FOOTE.

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THE NEW GLAD TIDINGS.

And there were in the same country shepherds abiding in the field, keeping watch over their flock by night. And lo, the angel . . . came upon them, and the glory . . . shone round about them: and they were sore afraid. And the angel said unto them, Fear not: for behold, I bring you good tidings of great joy, which shall be to all people, . . . on earth peace, good will toward men.—LUKE II. 8-14

The First Christmas.

CHRISTMAS comes but once a year, and considering the gluttony and wine-bibbing which goes on when it *does* come, it is perhaps a very good thing that the season occurs no oftener. Hundreds of Christmases, and therefore hundreds of years, have rolled by since the first one ushered into the world the most surprising baby that ever suckled and squealed. All the babies born since were commonplace in comparison with this astonishing youngster; and never, except when the stars sang together for joy, in a chorus that would have been well worth a shilling ticket, did nature show such uncommon interest in any event as in the appearance of this little lump of human dough. Nature has probably been sorry for her enthusiasm ever since. She is not easily excited, and her pace is steadier than a mule's. But as Jove nods, nature has an occasional fling. She went into raptures on the first Christmas, and when the chief person born on that day made his exit from this mortal stage she went black in the face with panic fear or hysterical sorrow. From that time she has conducted herself with exemplary decorum, and no doubt she is heartily ashamed of the indiscretions and eccentricities she was guilty of on the occasions referred to.

The story of the first Christmas is partly written in certain old manuscripts, of questionable date and authorship, which are regarded with extreme veneration by millions of people who know next to nothing about them. But there are many lapses and large deficiencies in the narrative, and we are authorised to supply what is wanting. We claim infallibility, of course, yet we do not deny it to others. Those who dissent from our version are free to make up one of their own, and it will doubtless be as infallible as ours. This may sound strange, but it is quite philosophical for all that. Do not all the Churches differ from each other, yet are they not all infallible? Why should one infallible man cut another infallible man's throat or put him in prison? Why cannot two infallible men dwell together in the same street like two greengrocers?

But to our story. It was the first Christmas Eve. A donkey was patiently wending his way to Jerusalem. On his back was seated a lady of some seventeen summers, and by his side walked a sturdy young man. They were husband and wife. The young man evidently belonged to the artisan class, and his better half was in that condition in which ladies love to be who love their lords. Both looked forward with unusual interest to the birth of the expected child. They had settled what name it should be called, so there was no doubt whatever as to its sex.

The day was drawing to an end when they approached Bethlehem. Making their way to an hotel kept by a relative of theirs, they asked for accommodation. Mr. Isaacs shook his head. "I am very sorry, Joe," he said, "but we are full up, and the worst of it is every hotel in the place is in the same state. Over an hour ago I tried desperately hard to oblige an old customer, a gentleman in the bacon trade, with a bed for the night, but I tried every hotel in Bethlehem without success. Fortunately I rigged up a few extra beds in the stable, and he has taken one of them. If you like another you are welcome, and egad Joe! that's the best I can do for you."

"Thank you, old fellow," said Joe, "but Mary is in a delicate state, as you see, and I would like to fix her up comfortably. Can't you go in and see if there is any gentleman who will go outside to oblige a lady?"

Mr. Isaacs returned in five minutes, and said it was no use. One gentleman had a bad cold, another had the gout, another the lumbago, and so on. Joseph and Mary were therefore obliged to return to the stable.

While Joseph was grooming the donkey Mr. Isaacs came in and started a curious conversation. "Joe," he began, "I don't wish to interfere with your business, but as a relative and an old friend you will pardon me for saying that I am a little puzzled; you have only been married four months, and if Mary is not a mother in a few days my name isn't Isaacs." Joseph did not resent these remarks, his natural meekness being such that no insult could ever disturb it. With a solemn face he replied, "My dear Isaacs, there is nothing to

pardon. Mary's baby is not mine. Its father lives in heaven. He is an angel, or something very high there. Mary has often told me all about it, but I have such a bad memory for details. The fact is, however, that Jeshua—we've settled his name—was conceived miraculously, as I've heard say some of the great ones among the heathen were. You may smile, but I've Mary's word for it, and she ought to know."

"My dear fellow," said Mr. Isaacs, "if you're satisfied, of course I am. I don't say Mary's story would go down with me if I were in your place, but I've no right to grumble if you are contented."

Thereupon Joseph, with a still more solemn face, replied, "Well, I was a little incredulous myself at first, but all my doubts were dispelled after that dream I had. I saw an angel at my bedside, and he told me that Mary's story was quite correct, and I was to marry her. Some of the neighbors chattered about a Roman soldier, called Pandera, who used to hang about her house while I was away at work in the south; but I regard it as nothing but gossip, and Mary says they are a pack of liars."

Mr. Isaacs returned to his customers in the hotel, winking and putting his finger to his nose directly his back was turned. Meanwhile Joseph and Mary had supper, after which she felt very unwell, and as luck or providence would have it, she was confined soon after twelve o'clock of a bouncing boy. Mr. Isaacs resolutely refused to turn any customer out of his bed, so the new comer was cradled in a manger filled with the softest hay.

Soon afterwards a fiery kite-shaped object was seen in the sky, advancing towards Bethlehem, and finally it rested on the chimney stack of Mr. Isaacs' hotel, where it gave such a lovely illumination that half the town turned out to see it. Two enterprising spirits, who mounted a ladder to inspect it closely, and if possible bring it down, were struck as if by lightning, and were with great difficulty restored to consciousness by the skill and efforts of a dozen doctors.

While the people were in a state of bewilderment, six old gentlemen appeared on the scene. They were attired like the priests of Persia, and their venerable appearance and long white beards filled the spectators with reverence. Only one of them could speak Hebrew, and he acted as interpreter for the company. "Where," he inquired, in a deep majestic voice, "is the wondrous babe who is born to-night? We saw his portent in the east and have followed it hither nearly six hundred miles." Mr. Isaacs informed them that the wondrous babe was in the stable, at which they were greatly astonished. Four of them said they must have made a mistake, and were for going home again; but the other two pointed to the supernatural light on the hotel chimney, and after they had consumed three bottles of Mr. Isaac's best Eschol they all made for the object of their search. Directly they entered the stable, little Jeshua stood up in the manger, and eyed them, and as they advanced he accosted them in their own language. This removed any doubts they entertained, and they at once knelt down and offered him the presents they had brought with them. One gave him a cake of scented soap, another a pretty smelling bottle, another an ivory rattle, another a silver fork, another a gold spoon, and another a cedar plate inlaid with pearl. Little Jeshua took the gifts very politely, made a graceful little bow, and a neat little speech in acknowledgement of their kindness. Then, handing them all over to his mother, to keep till the morning, he sang with great sweetness "Lay me in my little bed."

Soon after daylight some shepherds came in from the hills, saying they had seen a ghost, who had talked to them in enigmatical language; they could not understand exactly what he meant, but they gathered that good times were coming, when poor shepherds would eat mutton instead of watching it. On hearing of what had happened in the town precisely at the same time they were still more astonished. All Bethlehem was in uproar. Everybody was talking about little Jeshua, and the presents that were brought him by the enthusiastic inhabitants filled three large vans when Joseph and Mary set out again.

G. W. FOOTE.

Something Like a Ghost.

THOUGH not a pledged teetotaler, I have no partiality for spirits—of any kind. As readers of Dickens's *Christmas Carol* must first be made aware that Marley was dead, so it is necessary in my own ghost-story (since it may be questioned if my ghost ever lived or died) to premise that I had not been drinking. Even Christians with faith strong enough to move Ben Nevis would hardly credit that St. Paul saw the resurrected Jesus "out of due time" if they understood that the apostle's "thorn in the flesh" was a predilection for intoxicating beverages.

Certainly I had gone to bed with a splitting headache, occasioned by over-study of such works as Dr. Estwick's *Pneumatologia*, and St. Ambrose's *De Spiritu Sanctu*. I had been endeavoring to arrive at some conclusion regarding that mysterious person the Holy Ghost, to sin against whom is to be without forgiveness either in this world or in that which is to come. My study of the intricate question had led to the conclusion that this nebulous person—half influence, half abstraction, had evolved from the Jewish *Bath-kol* or daughter of a voice, and I found this surmise confirmed by finding that in the Gospel according to the Hebrews the Holy Ghost was feminine.*

It must have been after midnight when I awoke with a chilly, eerie, uncanny sort of feeling creeping all over me. There was some strange presence in the room. What is that form? Only the dim misty outline of my old trousers hanging on the cupboard door. Only this and nothing more. A waft of air like the clammy breathing of a human being passed over my face. "What is it? Is it a ghost? Yes or No?" Another waft seemed to give a token of assent. "Well, what do you want? If you've buried any hidden treasure in our back yard please describe the exact spot and I'll get up and dig for it—in the morning." Again a waft of air. "Well, if you've any deeds or gold and jewels hidden entirely, just retire while I attire myself, and tired as I am I'll do my best to help you discover them." Another waft. "Well, if it is blood-avenging you want, it's not in my line. I'm a peaceful citizen, and what is more, a married man, with a small wife and no family. If your restless spirit is still crying out for vengeance you ought to have come long ago, in my hot youth. No doubt some of the dynamiting faction will be happy to do the business for you. There is Hyndman, Burns or Burroughs. They seem likely persons. Could you not give them a turn?" Another clammy waft of air, more eerie and chilly than before. "Well, I'm not used to spirits. If you have anything to communicate you had better do it through Mr. Eglinton or Lottie Fowler. I take in the *Medium*, or rather the mediums take in me. You can address your communication to 'A Believing Sceptic.'"

Still the icy breath gave token that the Presence was in the room. Yet it obstinately refused to answer my questions. Surmising that it was a contest of will against will, or at any rate of human curiosity against ghostly reticence, I concentrated all my energy, not in the thunder of brow-beating determination that would never hit a ghost, but in the fond yearning with which Elsa seeks to know the name of her beloved, Lohengrin. At the same time giving the supreme sign of an esoteric Adept—by laying my forefinger on the *right* side of my nose (it must never be revealed which is the *right* side) I realised at once that I was in the presence of the Holy Ghost himself!

Himself or herself? that was the question. "Are you male or female?" I ventured to inquire. No answer. "Well, if you think it more delicate, shall we say neuter?" A strong blast of wind seemed to confirm this suggestion. "There's another matter or two I should like to inquire about. I'm not very particular about the nature of the blasphemy against you which will never be forgiven, though I feel considerably disposed to commit it, for your intrusion; but does it not probably consist in attributing to your dictation all the nonsense contained in the Bible? Now, as a con-

scientious honorable ghost, did you really inspire all those absurdities, atrocities, and obscenities? How came you to make vegetation before the sun, and birds before the fishes? When you took such a clumsy fashion of providing Adam with a wife, how came you to forget to furnish one for Cain? What made you think all animals could find their way to an ark and lived cooped up in it for one hundred and fifty days; or that a tower could be built to reach into heaven. This does not say much for your ingenuity, and yet as far as drawing the long bow is concerned it must be admitted you show considerable power of invention. You make sterile Palestine a land flowing with milk and honey, you ascribe to David and Solomon vastly more wealth than the national debt, and you slay 500,000 chosen men in a single day. Surely when you dictated such thumpers as those about Lot's wife turning to salt, the speaking donkey, Samson's exploits and how his strength lay in his hair; the standing still of the sun, Daniel in the lions' den, the prophet-swallowing fish, and the walking on the water, resurrection, and levitation of Jesus, you must have been competing for the honor of being champion liar in the universe. And then the disreputable expressions you make use of. I wonder any such blackguardly ghost can venture into a lady and gentleman's presence unless indeed you've come to explain that Mr. Satan has foisted in a host of interpolations in order to bring you into discredit. But you must confess by your own report that whenever you appeared on the scene some mischief always followed. When you visited Samson or Saul, or David, murder was sure to be perpetrated, and it is reported you were concerned in the suspicious death of Ananias and Sapphira. By decreeing 'Thou shalt not suffer a witch to live,' you were the occasion of the murders of hundreds of thousands of innocent women. Your instructions to the chosen people in regard to slavery and warfare are barbarous in the extreme, and have been the cause of untold bloodshed and misery. Are you not ashamed of yourself?"

"Are you not ashamed of yourself, talking all night long and disturbing me in my sleep?" said the well-known voice of my beloved spouse; "and then you've left both the door and the window open and the draught is enough to give one their death of cold." "Then the holy pigeon has flown away," said I, still partly under the influence of my delusion.

J. M. WHEELER.

LOVE IN A CHOIR.

THERE was a young maid in a choir
Who sweetly would sing of hell phoir:
Of its terrors so dhoir
To the wicked-souled lhoir,
And sinners who plunge in the mhoir.

This sweet little maid of the choir,
The gallants did greatly admhoir;
To her hand did aspoir,
Wore the finest attoir,
And swore to steer clear of hell phoir.

Alas! this sweet lass of the choir
Smiled sweetly on one in the mhoir
Of unrighteousness dhoir,
And she wedded a lhoir,
Regardless of hell and its phoir.

This shows that sweet love in a choir
Cares nothing at all for hell phoir,
And the consequence dhoir
Of a fall in the mhoir,
But mates with the love of a lhoir! SI SLOKUM.

A DIMINUTIVE friend had been out of town visiting his uncl's sheep farm at Westmoreland. It chanced that on the Sunday after his return home the subject of the Sunday School lesson was "The Good Shepherd." The little chap sat and listened to the teacher's discourse with a peculiar smile. There was nothing about sheep that he didn't know. "How does the Good Shepherd know his sheep?" presently asked the teacher. "I know," cried the boy, who felt that his time had come, "some he slits their ears and some he marks with red chalk!"

* See *Freethinker*, Feb. 22, 1885.



SATAN AND THE BOSS.

[With apologies to Mr. Irving and the author of the Book of Job.]

Now there was a day when the sons of God came to present themselves before the Lord, and Mephistophles came also among them. And the Lord said unto Mephistophles, Whence comest thou? Then Mephistophles answered the Lord, and said, From going to and fro on the stage and from walking up and down in it.—See JOB I. 6, 7.



RURAL CHRISTIANS.

CLERICAL SUBSCRIPTION.

I asked a sharp arithmetician
 To solve this simple proposition:
 "Suppose that large endowments were
 Offered to men if they would swear
 That two and two make one or three
 Or that a circle is a square;
 Tell me how many there would be
 To endorse the novel mystery,
 And pledge their faith on such condition?"
 Some thirty thousand,* certainly,
 Answered the sharp arithmetician.

The estimated number of English sky-pilots

A PARISH clerk, says the "Chicago Living Church," once gave out that "Mr. A. and B. would preach every Sunday to all eternity;" he meant alternately. Another mistake was "that there would be no service next Wednesday," as master had gane a fishing for another clergyman." Officiating was the word intended.

Not a hundred miles from the Strand a club has recently been started next door to a synagogue. The proprietor of the club asked one of the con(k)gregation if he would become one of the society. After several minutes thought the Sheeny said he would be pleased to join, because, "don't you see," said he, "I could, after praying for a couple of hours, come into the club and have a game of cards, and get back the money for my loss of time."



LOVELY SARAH.—AGED NINETY.

Then Abraham fell upon his face, and laughed, and said in his heart, Shall a child be born unto him that is an hundred years old? and shall Sarah, that is ninety years old, bear?—GEN. XVII., 17.

And Abraham said of Sarah his wife, She is my sister: and Abimelech king of Gerar sent, and took Sarah. But God came to Abimelech in a dream by night, and said to him, Behold, thou art but a dead man, for the woman which thou hast taken; for she is a man's wife. . . . And Abimelech took sheep and oxen and menservants, and womenservants, and gave them unto Abraham, and a thousand pieces of silver. . . . So Abraham prayed unto God; and God healed Abimelech, and his wife, and his maid-servants; and they bare children. For the Lord had fast closed up all the wombs of the house of Abimelech, because of Sarah, Abraham's wife.—GEN. XX., 2—18.

THE SINNER'S TRIUMPH.

He was kneeling in the pew,
Struggling, grunting, groaning, too,
When the ever-watchful pastor came on tiptoe down the aisle;
And then, kneeling by his side,
"Help the sinner, lord!" he cried:
"To find the blessed comforter and make the angels smile,"
And the sinner's face, which blazed
From exertion, quick was raised;
"Keep up the wrestle, brother," urged the pastor: "Nor
despair—
Hallelujah! Let us pray—
Have you found it? Brother say!"
"Yes, I've got it," said the sinner, as he picked up something
there.
"Glory! Here's another soul
That has found salvation's goal!"
Shouted loudly then the pastor: "Brother, tell them what
you've found."
Then the guileless stranger rose,
And with triumph did expose
The paper of tobacco he had dropped upon the ground.

We have read Joseph's account of his little affair with Mrs. Potiphar, but the *ex-parte* statement of a young man with his antecedents could only be received with *cum grano salis*. The vanity he displayed in his dress, and in such heated visions as that the sun, moon, and the seven stars stopped in their courses to pay obedience to him, is not specially calculated to inspire confidence. Indeed, everything in the life of this Asiatic dude tends to discredit his story.

'H O S A N N A.'

(Air—"Titwillow.")

An uproarious angel reposed on a cloud,
Singing "Sanna, Hosanna, Hosanna."
Till Jehovah said savagely, "Not quite so loud,
With 'Hosanna, Hosanna, Hosanna.'
All respectable angels have long been in bed—
Go away, or I'll throw something hard at your head,
But the cherub replied not. He bellowed instead,
"Hosanna, Hosanna, Hosanna."

Then Jahveh got up, and he cursed at the song
Of "Hosanna, Hosanna, Hosanna."
And he muttered, "I've stood it a little too long;
Hang 'Hosanna, Hosanna, Hosanna!'
'Twas all very well when the thing first began,
But to listen eternally wasn't my plan
To 'Hosanna, Hosanna, Hosanna.'"

But the obstinate cherub continued to roar
"Hosanna, Hosanna, Hosanna."
And Jehovah's reply as he made for the door,
Wasn't "Sanna, Hosanna, Hosanna."
Then he kicked the offender, with vigor and grace,
Through a hole in the clouds, into infinite space,
And a satisfied smile lit the heavenly face—
"Farewell, 'Sanna, Hosanna, Hosanna.'"

[EX-RITUALIST.

"How did Noah know a Flood was coming?" Little boy:
"He looked up the almanack."
"Pa, if Jesus is God's son how is it they have got different
names?" Five minutes later Bobby was between the sheets.

Salvation Soap.

THERE was a priest and he was mad ;
 He told all men, however bad,
 That he could make them pure and good
 By means of certain human blood,
 That formed a soap which, strange to say,
 Would wash all faults and crimes away
 From guilty men, while those who fell
 Unsoaped with it went straight to hell.
 All who used it would, he said,
 Live merrily when they were dead,
 And wings would sprout, and they should fly
 To sweep the cobwebs off the sky.
 And if they tired of this, then they
 Should lounge on golden thrones all day,
 Or strut about with lyres and crowns
 And crimson robes and snow-white gowns.
 Thus they should be, however vile,
 Prime mashers in the heavenly style.
 But they should wake where serpents hiss
 If they used any soap soap but this.
 Gulped down in pills however crude,
 'Twould serve as physic or as food.
 One cake alone, if swallowed whole,
 Cleansed Bill Sikes' coat or Borgia's soul.
 For none but his was genuine ;
 All other soaps but deepened sin.
 'Twas guaranteed by king and pope
 As far surpassing Pears's soap.
 E'en Lily Langtry's puffs were nought
 To those that he received unsought.
 More foolish was the written stuff
 Than Cleaver's silly punning puff.
 Use this soap once, and straight, one swore,
 On heaven's fair strand you're "washed ashore."
 Guiteau deposed that for his part
 It cleansed the cockles of his heart,
 For in its cakes he saw full well
 The Oily One of Israel.
 Peace, too, proclaimed its virtues oft
 Amidst well-lathered saints aloft ;
 It soaped his conscience reconciled,
 Made innocent as any child.
 Thus martyrs many blessed that soap
 That greased their path from the long rope
 To heavenly washhouses where they
 With blood-soap washed three times a day,
 Till made resplendent as the sun
 In moral beauty every one.
 Never such a boon was known
 As this new soap that stood alone.
 One trial bleached the blackest skins ;
 Much more, it cleansed all petty sins.
 It washed the tongue of fibs and libel ;
 'Twas guaranteed so in the Bible.
 Its precious cakes were bread and wine,
 Its wafers flesh and blood divine ;
 'Twas Elixir of Life, indeed ;
 'Twas everything that man could need.
 'Twas Heavenly Salve, Salvation Squills,
 And Sinner's Soap, and Last Day Pills.
 All these in one—'twas patented
 To heal the quick and raise the dead.
 Without it all would go to pot,
 For such was all men's (s)'oapless lot.
 Thus impudent old Soapy roams,
 And pesters women in their homes,
 And works their feelings up to buying
 By threats of swift and awful dying,
 Mingled with dabs of his soft soap,
 As samples of the greater hope.
 'Twas vaunted with so bold an air,
 It sold like wild-fire everywhere.
 And wise men wondered what could be
 This patent blood-soap stamped J. C.,
 With which the priest went up and down
 The streets of that deluded town,
 Till soap and sinners duly sold
 Had filled his pockets full of gold ;
 Which made some doubt, 'tis fair to add,
 Whether that priest was really mad,
 Or only artful, like the cheat
 Who swindles clowns in every street. [W. P. BALL.]

Saul's First Play.

A DRAMA IN TWO ACTS.

SCENE 1.—*A Farm. A number of cows and horses are seen grazing in the distance. Enter FARMER KISH and his son SAUL.*

FARMER KISH: Oh, Saul, Saul, my boy, our asses are stolen—our Jerusalem ponies gone—and Bank Holiday is at hand. What shall we do? Ah, I have it! Go up to London and see if you can find them among the numerous mokes that carry on their interesting callings in that gay city.

SAUL (*aside*): Ah, that'll give me an opportunity of having a fling with the dear girls. Father, I will obey your wishes; I will go, but you must allow me to take Joe the Cow-boy with me for company.

KISH: As you please, my son. So let it be.

[*Exit SAUL.*]

KISH: What a fine lad that is, to be sure! I ought indeed to be proud of being the father of such a boy. He is tall and handsome, and no doubt will make a first-rate farmer. But there, I am forgetting about the loss of my "asses." I must make inquiries in the village. I'll go at once and see Farmer Jacobson, and make known my loss.

[*Exit.*]

SCENE 2.—*A London Fair. Shooting galleries, "exhibitions," cocoa-nut alleys, Aunt Sallies, etc., in full business swing.*

1ST SHOWMAN (*to crowd of youths*): Walk up! Walk up! Walk up! A sacred boy, two years older than his own father, and he's to be seen alive, alive, oh! Also the Great Sporting Prophet, Mr. Samuel, who can foretell all the winners of the Derby for the next ten years. The greatest wonders of the world! Walk up, walk up!

2ND SHOWMAN: Come inside and see Samson Brass, the strongest man in the world. He can lift five hundred weight with his eyebrows! No deception! Come inside!

COCOA-NUT MAN: Roll, bowl, or pitch—three balls a punny.

(*Enter SAUL and Cow-BOY.*)

SAUL: Now we've parted with the girls, Joe, let's go and see the show. I should like to see the "Sporting Prophet," we might get a good "tip." Come on, I've got enough money left—though I was swindled by that fellow with the "three cards." I made sure I'd got the picture card—especially when I saw that parson-looking chap so anxious for me to pick the card I did. But it was all a swindle—never mind! Let us come in and see the strong man and the prophet. (*They go in.*)

(*Interior of Show.*)

1ST SHOWMAN (*addressing audience*): Ladies and gents, I've first to interdoose to yer notice the great 'airy man Samson Brass! He is the greatest livin' wonder. He measures thirty-six inches round the muscles of each arm; and each hair on his head weighs one hundred weight, three quarters, seven pounds, eight ounces and a half. By perfession, ladies and gentleman, he is a hartist; but up to the present he as limited hisself to drawin' of a truck. I've then to interdoose in the second place the Sporting Prophet, Mr. Samuel, who can tell you all that's going to happen after you are all dead! He's a wonder.

(*Organ strikes up, and the two "wonders" appear and go through their performances.*)

COW-BOY (*to SAUL*): Oh lor', these yur fellows are stunners and no mistake. Let's ask the prophet to tell us our fortune.

SAUL: That's a very good idea of yours, Joe. I'll ask him.

1ST SHOWMAN: Ladies and gents, I hope your all satisfied. The prophet will now walk round among you, and if you like to give him a copper or two, he will thank you. All that he gets is for hisself.

(*MR. SAMUEL the prophet walks among the crowd. SAUL has been talking to some of the audience about the loss of his father's asses and one of them has communicated the fact to 1ST SHOWMAN who in his turn has imparted the news to the prophet.*)

SAUL (*to SAMUEL*): Here, Mr. Prophet, I want to ask you a question. You say you can tell men's fortunes. Here's a tanner. Now tell me mine.

SAMUEL: So I can. First let me anoint you (*anoints him*). Now I can tell by my wonderful gifts that you are a son of Benjamin—(*aside*)—especially by your nose—and more wonderful still that you are looking for some asses—but you won't find them here. (*Cow-BOY and SAUL hold up their hands in amazement.*) But if you'll give me a bob I'll tell you whose got 'em, and that's Bill Snooks, the donkey-man on the Heath—(*aside*)—I know it because I tried to sneak them myself.

SAUL: Give you a shilling? Show me where they are and I'll give you five.

SAMUEL: I will.

(They all rush out on to the Heath, and after a terrible fight with SNOOKS and the donkey-boys—in which JOE THE COW BOY gets his eyes blackened—SAUL rescues the asses, and is unanimously crowned "King of Boxers" by the crowd for the severe punishment he administered to the donkey-boys)

C U R T A I N .

ACT II.

SCENE 1.—Kish's Farm. Enter SAUL and COW-BOY.

SAUL: Home again at last. All the donkeys safe and sound. I wonder what my dad will say?

JOE: Say you're a downright good follow, Mister Saul—and so you are.

Enter KISH who embraces his son.

KISH: Saul, my son, you are a courageous youth; you shall have this farm, and all my possessions shall be yours.

Enter Servant with letter.

KISH (amazed): What is this? A challenge! Signed SNOOKS. Who's Snooks?

SAUL: That's the man that stole your asses.

KISH: Indeed! But I see by this letter that he is coming here to take the donkeys away again. He says they are his. He challenges the whole village to fight. He brings a giant with him named "Go-liar," who, he says, "is open to all comers." What shall we do, my son?

SAUL: I have it! I'll get young David, the shepherd-boy to help me. He's the best stone-slinger in the village. I'll take up Snooks's challenge; I'll go for Snooks. I'll get Joe, the Cow-boy to cheek the giant, and while he is answering him I'll put David up to throwing the stone.

KISH: As you think best my son. Meanwhile we must barricade our house, and prevent these Socialistic fellows from purloining our property again.

Enter DAVID hurriedly.

DAVID: Oh, master! here's a go—a gang of ruffians are coming over here. As they passed me I overheard them say that they meant "making a clean sweep" of all the cattle in the village, and so I ran to inform you, master.

KISH: Well done, my lad.

SAUL: Fill your pockets with stones, Davy, and follow me. Now, Joe, bring my gun and the dog and come along.

SCENE 2.—Another part of same farm. SNOOKS, with his giant and donkey-men on the hill.

A CROWD OF VILLAGERS: Go away you ruffians. Shame on you—stealing poor farmer's asses. Ugh! ugh!

ANOTHER GROUP OF VILLAGERS: Go to London, you scoundrels; you'll find enough asses there.

SNOOKS'S DONKEY-MEN: Bah! we defy you. The donkeys are ours, and we'll have them or know the reason why.

GO-LIAR: Now then you over-fed yokels, put forth your man. Let him come up here and put up his "dukes," and I'll show him.

Enter DAVID and SAUL.

DAVID (puts his thumb to his nose and extends his fingers, at the same time shouting): Yah, yah!

GO-LIAR: What! a little Rapskullian like you. I'll pull your nose for you if you come here.

DONKEY-BOY: And he's got a wopper, too.

SAUL: Look here, Snooks, I'm game for you. (Advances towards SNOOKS.)

(GO-LIAR advances too. In the twinkling of an eye DAVID slings a stone, hits GO-LIAR on the head, and raises a bump.)

GO-LIAR: Oh! oh! Oh, my head, my head! (Falls on the ground and groans.)

(The donkey men rush off. DAVID comes forward and deals a number of furious blows until the poor giant is dead.)

VILLAGERS (shouting): Hurrah! hurrah! Saul has slain his thousand, and David his tens of thousands! Hurrah! hurrah!

Enter POLICEMAN.

POLICEMAN: What did I hear? Saul killed a thousand? I shall arrest him. And David tens of thousands? I shall arrest him too. (Arrests SAUL.) I arrest you for murder.

SAUL: I assure you I've killed nobody.

VILLAGERS: No, not one.

POLICEMAN (to DAVID): And I arrest you also.

DAVID: You can't. I'm under age. I shan't be thirteen

till next Christmas, before which time I hope to be able to supply you with further amusement.

(The crowd shouts, the POLICEMAN frowns, and SAUL bows his acknowledgments to the audience and asks them to excuse all errors in his play, as it is his first attempt.)

C U R T A I N .

ARTHUR B. MOSS.

Tom Sterling's Punishment.

So poor Tom Sterling's gone to hell:

I always told him 'twould be thus

If he continued to rebel

Against Religion's incubus.

"Far better," I was wont to say,

"That we profess to share these crazes,

Than find our precious selves some day

Flung neck and heels to hell and blazes."

But sturdy Tom no inch would budge

Beyond the lines of common-sense:

He hated everything like fudge,

And honored sound intelligence.

He could not be imposed upon

With tricks like squaring circles neatly:

A parson who once tried it on,

Departed homeward rather fleetly.

Tom Sterling died a week to-day:

Ah, how I've thought of him since then,

And wondered if he now would play

The double-shuffle, so that when

My time arrives, and heaven I seek,

Along with other ghostly skippers,

I'll find poor Tom before the beak

In tinsel gown and golden slippers!

Poor dear old Tom (all jokes apart)

Was one of Nature's best of sons:

He had the truest, kindest heart:

Were good deeds weighed, Tom's had been tons.

But what availed his spotless life

While he the Holy Ghost rejected?

For such a crime eternal strife

Is only what might be expected.

His loved his wife and children dear,

In kindness none could him excel:

He loved his friends with love sincere,

And all of them loved him as well.

But gods he neither loved nor sought;

He simply smiled at "holy" things:

His penalty—oh, horrid thought—

Is forfeiture of crown and wings!

Yes, now tormented by the fire

Of God-planned everlasting hell,

Poor Tom hath leisure to admire

God's justice, which doth thus repel

All efforts to achieve Freethought,

Or e'en sincere investigation:

Such acts the Lord considers ought

To be rewarded with damnation.

I fancy now I hear Tom shriek,

While tongues of flame lick bare his bones:

And hell's great depths foul odors reek,

And ring with mingled cries and moans.

Oh, Tom, you might have died in debt,

Done bloody murder, theft and arson;

And then we should in heaven have met,

Had you but loved your God—and parson.

ENAEID.

A LITTLE girl made her advent in the infant class of a Huddersfield Sunday school. The desultory conversation on the part of the teacher, showed the existence of a Divine Being and his abode in heaven. The lesson was about over, when the new-comer, who had been an attentive listener, said: "Does God live up there?" pointing out of the window to the expanse of beautiful blue that formed the sky overhead. "Yes," replied the teacher. "What teeps him from fallin' frough?" was the next question of the little scholar.

ADVENTURES OF MOSES.



1. Moses and the Bull-rushes.



2. Escapes the Police.



3. Meets God in a Bush.



4. The Serpent Trick.



5. The Frog Trick.



6. Leads out the Jews.



7. Jehovah's Secretary.



8. Breaks the Commandments.



9. Draws Water from the Rock.



10. Fasts Forty Days.



11. Marries an Ethiopian Beauty



12. Writes an Account of his own Funeral.

Solomon the Wise 'Un.

WHAT a lucky thing it was for posterity that David made love to Mrs. Uriah. If he had not providentially cast his optics on that fair lady, he would never have had her better-half killed and taken her unto himself as wife. Bathsheba had, before her marriage to David, presented him with an illegitimate youngster, which providentially died; and it was all owing to the interference of a fellow named Nathan that David was compelled to marry her. If this event had not happened, the wisest man that ever existed, or ever will exist, would never have existed, for little Solomon was the result of this happy union. It is something terrible to contemplate how ignorant the world would have been if this young wise-acre had never been born.

Solomon's pa and ma were very proud of him, and they had cause to be—for he knew his letters almost before he was born, and he could say the Lord's Prayer before it was written. He never went to school, for he knew more than anybody could teach him. Little Solomon had, therefore, much time for play, and being such a genius, he soon invented several interesting games, such as hop-scotch, tip-cat, and marbles. After carefully searching some ancient MS., we also find that he was the author of several jolly Christmas games, such as blind-man's-buff, forfeits and kiss-in-the-ring—even in his young days he was extremely fond of the ladies. He also invented that intensely-interesting game at cards, entitled "beat-your-neighbor-out-of-doors."

But it was not all play with young Solomon, for he had to help his dad write the Psalms, and it took both of them several years to finish that work. We have it on good authority that it was for this literary help that David, when going aloft, chose him as his successor to the throne in preference to his eldest son Adonijah. Unfortunately, not much is known of Solomon until he was made king of Israel. He kept a diary each year of his young life, but he was too wise to let the world know of his goings on, so he had them destroyed.

When he was made king of Israel, the first wise act he performed was to have his brother Adonijah put to death for wishing to marry Miss Abishag, the young damsel who was put in bed with his old father to make him warm. Poor Adonijah had been bamboozled out of the throne, and he thought he ought to have something belonging to his dad, but it appears that Solomon, being wise, thought otherwise. Anyhow, it was a terribly mean action. Solomon also had Messrs. Shimei and Joab slain, because his old dad told him to be avenged on them for some trifling affair. There's nothing like obeying your parents.

After Solomon had been king a year or two he occasionally went by cheap excursions to Egypt, and there fell madly in love with Pharaoh's daughter, a splendid girl, who had a smile like a hyena's. He soon won the beautiful creature for his wife. After spending their honeymoon at Gibeon, he had to take furnished apartments for her at Jerusalem just while he built a house—which only took him thirteen years. It was an enormous building. His spouse wondered why he was making it so large. She soon found out, poor thing, for when he had finished building it, he not only took her to the new abode, but also about one hundred more wives he had stowed away in furnished apartments in different parts of the city. And then he was not satisfied, but married a fresh one every week until they numbered 700 in all, besides 300 concubines he brought in on the sly. What a happy family it must have been. It must have taken up most of Solomon's time to keep them in order. And what a memory he must have had to think of all their names. But perhaps he had them numbered like prisoners. We can imagine him shouting out, "No. 639, come and have a cup of coffee along with me and bring your own bread and butter." "No. 264, mind you have those pork chops ready for supper, and see that the onions are well cooked." "No. 698, get the bed nice and warm by ten o'clock. I shall be home from a political meeting by that time."

Solomon was not only well up for wives and concubines, but he also had a few horses. There were stalls in his stables for 40,000 chariot horses alone. What a feed there must have been for the cats when they pegged out.

King Solomon was exceedingly rich—no one has ever since possessed as much money. Well, he wanted a lot for household purposes; but he wanted still more to build his Temple, or rather God's Temple. It was a grand building, smothered in silver and gold and precious stones, with ivory thrones, and devil knows what. No wonder it cannot now be discovered.

People have stolen it bit by bit. He employed 30,000 men and it took seven years to build it. What a pity somebody don't start a similar structure just now, and then so many would not have to go without a Christmas dinner.

After Solomon had built the Temple (for he bossed the job) there was a general thanksgiving by the people, and sheep and oxen were offered up to the Lord—the Lord only knows how many, for the Bible says "they could not be told or numbered for the multitude." What a waste of good mutton and beef! History would not repeat itself in this instance if another enormous Temple is ever started.

While the meat was cooking and the Lord was taking a good sniff at it, Solomon blessed "all the people of Israel in a loud voice." We should reckon it would be rather dangerous to get close to him when he spoke if he could make so many people hear him. Taking in proportion the number of wives, horses, and workmen he had, there must have been a few millions attending that thanksgiving.

Solomon was not only a builder, he was an author. He wrote 3,000 proverbs, and 1,005 songs. All excepting one of his songs are lost. Perhaps he sold the others on Friday nights while the Jews were out marketing. The one that is not lost describes all the female charms in rather plain language. If he had published it in Holywell Street, the police would have been down on him at once; or else the Society for the Suppression of Vice would have taken the matter in hand.

Solomon's Proverbs are rather interesting and sometimes amusing. He certainly must have been writing from experience when he says "It is better to dwell in the corner of a house-top than with a brawling woman and in a wide house." And "He that putteth his trust in the Lord shall be made fat" is rather neat. Everyone knows that if you put too much trust in the Lord, there is a good chance of getting thin, although it was an exception with the Virgin Mary. "The rod and reproof gives wisdom," says Solomon. No doubt he himself owed all his wisdom to the hidings he received from old David. In chap. xxv. 22, Solomon wisely tells us how to treat an enemy. "Thou shalt heap coals of fire upon his head and the Lord will reward you." Well, that's one way of keeping a fellow warm this cold weather, but we guess it would be rather unpleasant for him. Another proverb says "He that winketh with his eye causeth sorrow." We dare-say Solomon caused much sorrow to himself by winking at his 700 wives before marriage. It would have been all right if he had winked with his boots. "Train up a child in the way he should go: and when he is old he will not depart from it." That is a very true proverb, as regards himself particularly—for he was a chip of the old block.

It was not so much for his Proverbs, or for his Songs, or for his great Temple, that he was famous, but for his judgment between the two mothers. They both lived in the same house and each had given birth to a child, but one of the women had been having too many thimblesful of gin, and come home drunk and overlaid her child and suffocated it. Finding her child dead, she, during the night, took the other child while its mother was sleeping. In the morning there was a rare rumpus, and they both trotted off with the live youngster to Solomon for him to settle their little dispute, instead of fighting it out. After a lot of wrangling and jangling the wise king sent for a sword, so that the child might be divided between them—much to the delight of the woman who was not the mother of it. But the real mother naturally objected, and preferred to let the other woman have her child rather than it should be cut up—for that would have cut her up. And wise old Solomon could immediately tell by such behavior whose child it was. And when all Israel read the report in the morning papers of his wonderful judgment "they feared him, for they saw that the wisdom of God was in him." Wasn't he a wise fellow—and yet thousands of eight-year-old youngsters at the present day are a little more so, and could easily give a similar judgment.

Noted Queen Sheba soon heard of Solomon's fame for wisdom. So she came to Jerusalem to ask him "some hard questions." The questions she asked him are not generally known, but we have raked up half a dozen of them, and they are as follows:—(1) How old was Adam when he was born? (2) What was Mrs. Cain's maiden name? (3) What was the height of Jacob's ladder? (4) How much would a pawnbroker lend on Joseph's coat? (5) Did Aaron suffer from corns? and (6) How much did Esau pay for a shave? Solomon answered these important questions to the satisfaction of Queen Sheba, and she gave him 120 talents of gold,

a few thousand packets of spice towards making a Christmas pudding for his small family, and some precious stones—the Bible doesn't say if they were plum-stones. And in return he gave unto Queen Sheba "all her desire"—whatever that may mean. After that she took her departure, she and her servants—to the great delight of Solomon's wives.

Solomon seems to have gone wrong soon after receiving this visit, for his wives turned his heart and drove him to idolatry in his old age, and the Lord stirred up two adversaries against him, named Hadad and Rezin, who took from him the best part of his kingdom. This so upset his apple-cart that he kicked the bucket, after being king of Israel forty years. He was buried by a respectable undertaker in the city of David. It was a grand sight. All the lamp-posts were in deep crape, and the pubs did a roaring trade. Six hundred of his wives followed his godly remains to slow music on numerous jew's-harps. He was lowered down and slept with his fathers. Let us all sincerely hope he never disturbed them—perhaps he was wise enough to know better. Doubtless he is in heaven by this time, with his seven hundred wives; if so, we wish him a merry Christmas.

SCOFFER.

A Christmas Carol.

CARVE the roast and slice the duff, boys,
Christ was born to-day;
Guzzle till you've had enough, boys,
Sing and dance and play.

Holy Christmas, keep it up, boys!
Now's the time for sport;
Pledge each other in the cup, boys,
Clip the girls and court.

Eat and drink and spoon your fill, boys,
Round the board or fire;
Take your pleasure with a will, boys,
Ease your heart's desire.

When the wine gleams in the glass, boys,
And the berries shine,
Toast and kiss the pouting lass, boys,
Taste her lips divine.

Sit up till the grey morn dawns, boys,
Never think of bed,
Cease to be Fate's passive pawns, boys,
Free your heart and head.

Hang the spirit! Plump the flesh, boys!
Let the strait-laced rail;
Break through all their canting mesh, boys,
Mock their prosy tale.

Ask the parson, ask the priest, boys,
Whether mirth is right,
And he'll answer you at least, boys,
'Tis to-day and night.

This is such a jolly time, boys,
All men should be glad;
All the season's saintly rhyme, boys,
Tells you "Don't be sad."

Christ was born this very day, boys,
All your sins to bear;
Else you all were on the way, boys,
To Gehenna's flare.

God became a squealing brat, boys,
For your sinful sakes,
Muled and puked—just think of that, boys!—
Saving you from snakes.

Hallelujah! Praise the Lord, boys,
With a jovial heart;
Solemn faces be abhorred, boys;
Every one will smart!

Show the Lord you're mighty glad, boys;
Eat and drink and sing;
Keep your Christmas up like mad, boys;
Have a heavenly fling!

BELIEVER.

The Childhood of Christ.

[FROM OUR OWN CORRESPONDENT.]

BERLIOZ's sacred trilogy called "The Childhood of Christ" was performed the other Saturday at the Crystal Palace with great success. Of course your correspondent was there, and begs to report on this grand and sacred theme. The Cantata opened with a tremulo accompaniment showing the indecision of Joseph at having to turn out at night and seek medical advice. A chorus of jubilancy then takes place at the birth, merging gradually into a solo for the Virgin Mary, thanking inquiring ladies for their kind attention. An interval here takes place, and then the scene opens with a sweet, soothing melody, indicative of the chewing of the rubber-pad to assist dentition, the tune gradually merging into a weird, mysterious movement, representing the entry of the Virgin Mary with a spoon of jam covering powder. A scree of bagpipes is here heard, showing that the juvenile Christ has serious doubts about contents of spoon. The movement gradually sinks to a sweet lullaby, which is very effective as the melody falls to low murmurings of peace and happiness. The chorus here breaks in with a grand allegro effect to represent morning and the finding of the first tooth. The mother's gladness and joy is shown by a sweet solo, sung very effectively. In a baritone part Joseph offers up prayer, and promises libations of something short to wet the babe's head. The chorus of boys then takes up the singing as if imparting the intelligence aloft. Another interval, and then a sudden burst of a laughing chorus breaks in as of children at play. The time for school is then announced by Joseph in a fortissimo outburst. The music then suddenly assumes a melancholy strain. A gentle solo on the big drum is very much in place here, showing chastisement of Christ, he not being willing to commence his studies. A song of triumph follows as Joseph carries the victim to school. Presently there follows a fine musical gem as Christ hymns forth his joy at having succeeded in getting into his first trousers, with solo for Virgin Mary showing pride at the figure he cuts. Joseph sings a wailing song, very piano, indicative of the cost of those trousers.

A song of contentment is next introduced to represent Joseph at work in his workshop; the melody gradually dies away as the tools are found blunted. A bag-pipe solo of a wailing description is then heard, showing Christ catching it, he being the culprit. A warbling on the big drum shows the dusting his jacket is having. The Virgin Mary here bursts in with shrieks in D minor, and rescues her darling son. After a short interval there is a puzzling kind of glee or catch, evidently showing Christ's contention with the doctors in the Temple. Christ asks them in a very beautiful solo in waltz time, "If a kitchen is 14 feet by 12 and the kitchen poker weighs 7 lbs, what's the age of the cook?" Consternation of learned doctors; jeering chorus by neophytes; doctors at last finishing this grand scene by a chorus of despair. The interest here increases, as many fine choruses are pealed forth, notably the one of thanksgiving at Christ having his hair cut for the first time, another of jubilancy at Christ leaving off pinafores, and a grand march of youths and maidens, bursting forth in a truly noble melody at the apprenticeship of Jesus Christ to his father Joseph to learn the mysteries of wheelbarrow-making.

The friend that went with me says he never knew anybody sleep so soundly during a musical performance as I did. I withered him with a look. He is now a pariah.

Christian Humor.

FAR in the deep where darkness dwells,
A land of horror and despair,
Justice has built a dismal hell,
And laid her stores of vengeance there.

Eternal plagues, and heavy chains,
Tormenting racks and fiery coals,
And darts to inflict immortal pains,
Dipped in the blood of damned souls!

There Satan, the first sinner, lies,
And roars and bites his iron bands,
In vain the rebel strives to rise,
Crush'd with the weight of both thy hands.

There guilty ghosts of Adam's race
Shriek out and howl beneath thy rod.
Once they could scorn a savior's grace,
But they incensed a dreadful God.

Tremble, my soul, and kiss the son,
Sinner, obey the savior's call:
Else your damnation hastens on,
And hell gapes wide to wait your fall!

REV. ISAAC WATTS, Christian Humorist

A VERGER in a grand cathedral desirous of seeing a blank wall decorated, declared that the Ten Commandments would be better than nothing.



JEHOVAH FOILED. (MOSES REFUSES TO BE POISONED.)

And it came to pass by the way in the inn, that the Lord met him, and sought to kill him.—EXODUS IV., 24.

GOD THE IDIOT, GOD THE IDIOT'S SON,
GOD THE IDIOT'S DAUGHTER.

IN the beginning there was none save the infinite idiot, the eterna fool, who was omnipresent and self-existent and contained all things in himself. Nevertheless co-eternal with himself was his only begotten son. The father existed without ever having begun to exist, and the son was as old as his father. Proceeding from them but nevertheless co-eternal also with them was a third person, the sacred Ghost! Although current opinion may contradict us, I think we may safely assume that this Ghost was of the feminine gender. God the idiot's son was undoubtedly masculine, whilst God the idiot himself must have been a hermaphrodite, else how could he have had a son without a wife? Having therefore hermaphrodite and male, the third in the natural order of things must have been a female.

These three then—the father idiot, the mutton idiot, and the Bogie idiot—began without a beginning and were made of nothing! Nevertheless this infinite nothing has earned our eternal gratitude and forms fit object for our prayers and adoration.

God the father idiot is indeed a very old friend. It is now nearly 6,000 years since he first made the world and introduced his sweet self to man. And very sweet he at first made himself. But alas, one day he caught the man poaching on his private preserves. What wonder that he then flew into a tantrum, cursed everything, and kicked the poor man out of paradise. However despite his rage the old fellow soon began to hanker after us again and a peace was therefore patched up. But, alack and alas, after a time men began to tire of the eternal contemplation of idiotic loveliness, whereat the idiot's vanity, which was abnormally large, naturally took offence, and a splendid vindication of offended idiocy was given in a universal flood which drowned everyone except eight souls who had the sense to make a boat.

But man still continued to prefer eating to singing, so wat at last poor old Jahveh got so huffy that nothing could appease him save the universal torturing of everybody for ever and ever. Yet scarce had the sentence gone forth and the dear old fickle fool again changed his mind. Someone must certainly suffer to content poor Jahveh's offended majesty. But if not man, why not, as a happy thought, substitute Jahveh's own son? This introduces us to the wandering Jew. Sweet wandering Jew! Dear little Jesie Christ! How we should love him! For he left his papa and his golden throne in heaven to come down on earth to play at carpentering for our salvation. For a time indeed he grew up quite an ordinary sensible workman. But the fatal trait of hereditary insanity soon manifested itself when he discovered who he was. At once he set about his idiot father's business, damn'd the rich right and left, and kicked up such a general

shindy that at last the poor lunatic found himself duly crucified and buried. And when his papa helped him up again, poor Jesus was so sore and frightened that he cut short his stay on earth, and having no desire to be sacrificed again (not for Joe! i.e. Jahveh) he flew off and sent the sacred Ghost to take his place.]

Now her Royal Highness the holy bogie is a very important personage, and he who speaks a word against her fair name—my eye! won't he catch it in the lake of fire! For the present this sacred Ghost has taken up her abode in our stomachs—beg pardon, I mean in our hearts. The first time a baby opens its mouth to squeal, the holy bogie jumps down its throat and finally takes possession of its heart. And, poor little baby, you'll find nurse bogie deuced hard to get rid of!

Let us never lose sight of the innumerable benefits, which the Great Idiotic Trio has showered upon us:—

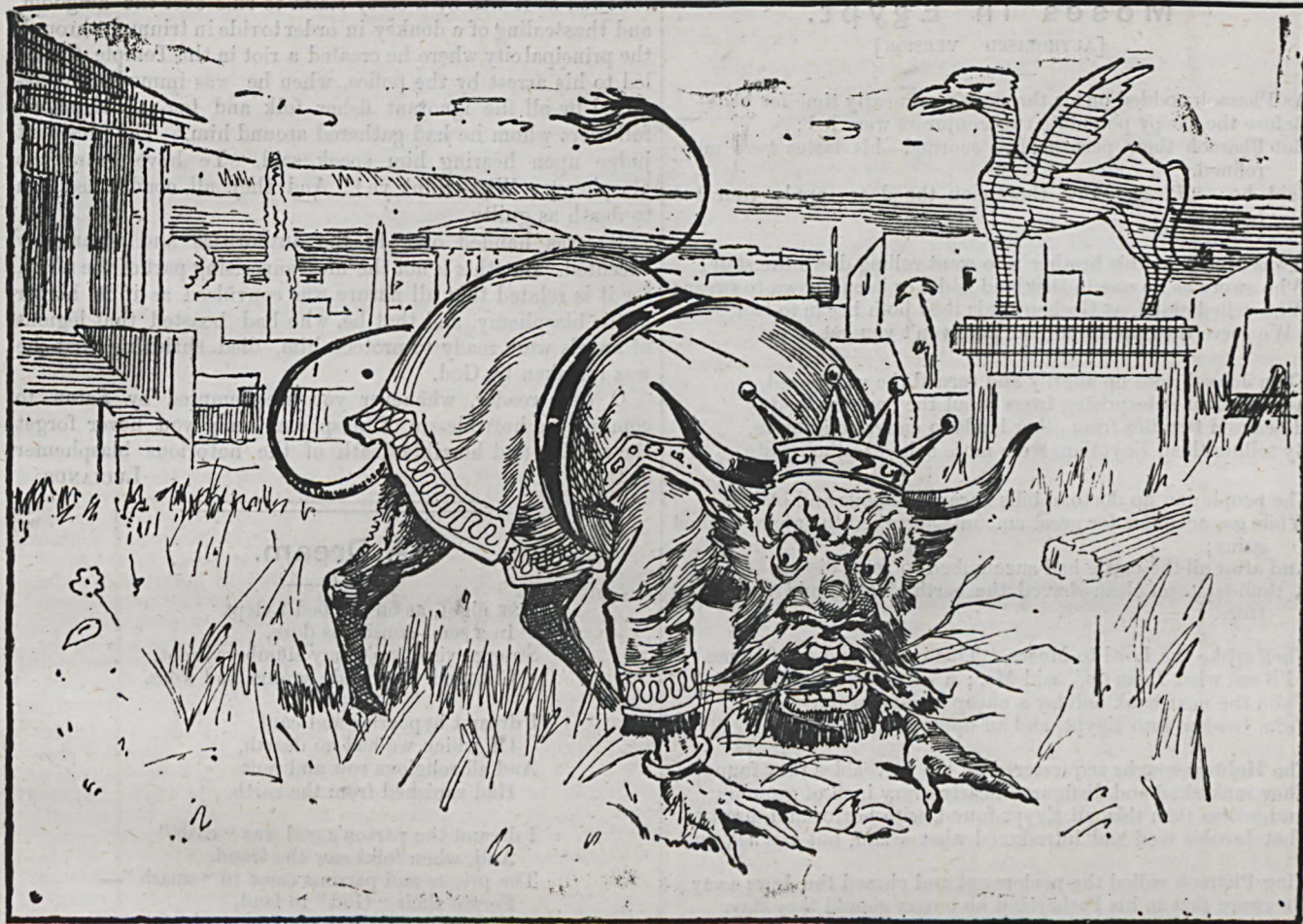
God the father idiot has made us, cursed us, blest us, drowned us, dried us, burnt us, and kicked and petted us by turns down to the present day. He is ready to listen to all our twaddle and never get bored, nor ill-treat us, so long as we properly pet and coax him and make him think himself somebody important.

God the son idiot has given us a beautiful perennial bath in his own blood, which the angels will always serve hot or cold to order. He also kneads himself into dough and bakes himself in a million ovens for our special spiritual comfort. Dear Jesus, no wonder the believer loves you. Who wouldn't try to win the favor of an everlasting brewer and an eternal baker?

As for the idiots' "comforter," the bogus dove, her Royal Highness has from the Day of Pentecost onwards acted as barmaid in a public spiritual grog-shop and will at a moment's notice supply anyone with any quantity of "holy" spirit, guaranteed pure and warranted to make the drinker shout with joy, singing to the Lord in spiritual songs and gabbling in unknown tongues the glory of the fools' divine.

The long and short of the matter is that our idiotic friends above have fully made up their minds that they are most loveable objects, so loveable indeed that they need us to sing their praises to all eternity; and when anybody forms such a good opinion of themselves, nothing can annoy them more than to be undeceived. Hence if we give old Jahveh reason to think that we are not sufficiently susceptible to his charms, the offended tyrant will "politely" damn us for ever in everlasting burnings. Shall we therefore cry; "O, Lord save us"? No; rather let us boldly say: "Thou idiot God, thy conceit, thy egotism, thy vanity, thy tyranny, thy despotism, thy vindictiveness, thy cruelty, thy stupidity, and thy cowardice, render thee in our eyes a most despicable object. We pamper thee not, O infinite baby; we hate thee as an impudent, conceited, and tyrannical idiot, and see in thee but one good point—thou art a myth."

Written to Satan's Dictation by BEELZEBUB.



NEBUCHADNEZZAR AT GRASS.

The same hour was the thing fulfilled upon Nebuchadnezzar: and he was driven from men, and did eat grass as oxen, and his body was wet with the dew of heaven, till his hairs were grown like eagles' feathers, and his nails like birds' claws.—DANIEL IV., 33.

Dum Vivimus Vivamus.

OH, blest is the Priest in the fold of the Church
That's built on the Heavenly Rock:
Instead of his feeding the lambs of his charge,
The shepherd is fed by his flock!
And sternly he ruleth them, body and soul:
Like the scriptural iron his rod;
He prays for their peace and he pockets their cash,
And all for the glory of God!

So here at my table I sit and I drink
The choicest and best of all wine—
The life of the Priest is the brightest of lives,
And the brightest of all shall be mine.
I pray for long life, and our Mother is good—
The faithful receive their reward:
And fast at my feet from her bounteous hand
The sweetest of blessings are poured.

I go to the Mass and I pray for the souls
Of all who have gone on before:
God bless all the Saints of our dear Mother Church,
And smother the infidel's roar.
Give pence to the Pope and submit to the Priest—
Oh, creed most unique, most divine!
I fill up my glass—let my thirsty soul drink
God's peace on the Church in this wine!

Oh pray for the Church—and oh, pray that her Priest
May ever live after his wont:
Thrice blest be the faithful who swallow it all
And damned be the wretches who don't!
Once more let me drink to this glorious state—
No family troubles my rest:
No wife has the Priest—'tis the law of the Church—
A bachelor's life is the best.

My children? ah, yes—well but—all men have strayed;
These are but more drops to the wave!
More chickens to gather 'neath God's holy wing—
More souls for the Savior to save,—
Besides there is pardon for all who repent
In the name of Religion benign:
Full pardon and free! Let me drink once again—
Thank God for this beautiful wine!

Oh, liquor of heaven! Oh water of life!
Heart-cheering to God and to man,
Let me drink of thee now and drinking forget
That life here below's but a span.
Thou Giver of gifts and Creator of all,
Whose glory for ever shall shine,
Refuse us, deny us whatever thou wilt
But spare us this life-giving wine!

Have ye seen little Marie?—My niece? hem! yes—
A man can't be always alone—
Why seest thou the mote in the eye of the Priest
And heedst not the beam in thine own?
Humanum erarre est!—Marie to thee
I drink in this bumper of wine—
Thou beauteous seraph—a Father I'll be—
A Father to thee—and to thine!

Her eyes are like stars in the vault of the sky,
Such ringlets of golden-hued hair!
An ankle, by heaven!—a foot, ha, ha, ha!
No angel in glory so fair.
My darling, I drink to thy ravishing charms,
Thou foretaste of Paradise bright,
God grant thee long life—perpetual youth—
And spare thee the darkness of Night!

The Priest is—the devil! where laid I my glass?
How came I to be on the floor?
I float—as in air—ha, ha! give me the flask—
Here's life to the Priest evermore!
Sweet Marie, by Christ! here's to thee once again—
I worship thee—I am thy slave—
We'll meet up in heaven when earth's day is done,
And mock at the power of the grave.

Hail! pleasures to come—eh?—my tongue is unloosed,
I spoke of the lass; 'twas a jest—
She is only my niece—a dutiful child—
And I am a pious old priest!
I drank but a drop—did I tell of aught else?
A trifle—remember it not;
But rather pray thou that the priest may have grace.
To bear his unfortunate lot.
O pray that the heretic's portion be hell—
Thrice curst be the hour of his birth!
The voice of the Church shall be ever supreme—
The faithful shall govern the earth.

A. G

Moses in Egypt.

[AUTHORISED VERSION]

As Pharaoh nodded on his throne—'twas nearly time for bed—
Before the sleepy potentate two conjurors were led;
But Pharaoh their performance scorned—his tastes were more refined.
Said he: "Please show these men the door; apply your toe behind."

'Twas Moses and his brother who went rolling down the stair;
Who swore as no one in that land had e'er been known to swear;
Who yelled aloud, as Goshenwards they both began to trot,
"We serve the opposition god, and won't you get it 'ot."

Then Jahveh rose up angrily and turned the waters red,
And hosts of enterprising frogs about the country sped;
He caused the flies from other lands to emigrate in haste,
By telling them Egyptians were more suited to their taste.

The people ran up doctors' bills because of boils and blains,
While gas accounts for great amounts absorbed their hard-earned gains;
And after all the cattle had succumbed to some disease—
A thunderstorm clean-shaved the earth of grass and herbs and trees.

Then spake the Lord to Moses, "This is pain and grief to me."
"I'll see what I can do," said Mo.; a wicked wink wink'd he.
Upon the next bank holiday a cheap excursion ran
From Goshen into Egypt, and an uproar soon began.

The Hebrew roughs sequestered all the moveables they found,
They ransacked and disfigured nearly every inch of ground;
And, worse than this, all Egypt found, with horror and disgust,
That Jacob's seed had introduced what *seemed*, but was *not*, dust.

King Pharaoh called the peelers out and chased the Jews away;
He swore that in his Fatherland no longer should they stay.
Said he, "Though sorely tried I've still remained urbane and bland;
But this 'ere plague of 'low cusses' is more than I can stand."

Out spake old Moses to the king, "I bear you no ill-will,
I'll give the kids a parting feast—we'll toss who pays the bill;
But, as our space is limited, there won't be room for all,
Each eldest child shall here to-night attend a children's ball."

Then Moses bought some nasty stuff and put it in the tarts,
And ev'ry little "tum" that night was seized with dreadful smarts
When morning dawned the revellers were dead as they could be,
But murdering Moses and the Jews had sloped across the sea.

King Pharaoh led his army forth, he gained the briny main;
Nor noticed that the Red Sea bridge was all but cut in twain.
Hence when the lot at length had got some distance from the shore,
The bridge gave way and never they returned to Egypt more.

But Moses and his brethren, who this little joke had planned,
Were marching with no good intent towards the Promised Land,
Where they designed to do still worse, and burn and steal and slay
Till not a living soul was left to turn against their sway.

EX-RITUALIST.

[Translated from tablets recently discovered in Egypt, and thus proving the Bible account to be inaccurate in many particulars, such as the order of the plagues, etc.]

A Warning to Blasphemers.

As a caution to any of our youthful readers who may be tempted to fall into the dreadful and deadly sin of "blasphemy," an offence deemed the more abominable since it is directed not against man but against God, the following well-known, if not well authenticated story is given as illustrating the odious character of the crime and the awful punishment with which it is visited.

J C. was born of poor but possibly honest parents in the little village of B—. The few records of his infancy show that he was precocious and impudent to his parents and elders. He even displayed his insolence at twelve years of age to the ministers of religion, and gave his sorrowing parents a deal of trouble. On one occasion he said to his mother, "Woman, what have I to do with thee?" and he is even said to have cast doubts upon his own paternity by his father, one Joseph—a respectable village carpenter. In an evil hour he assumed to be the son of God. This dreadful blasphemy,

followed as it was by a crazy claim to rule over the kingdom, and the stealing of a donkey in order to ride in triumph through the principal city where he created a riot in the Temple, finally led to his arrest by the police, when he was immediately deserted by all the ignorant fisher folk and tag-rag vagabond followers whom he had gathered around him. The president judge upon hearing him speak, said, "Ye have heard the blasphemy: What think ye?" And they all condemned him to death as guilty.

He was handed over to the authorities and summarily executed. But this is not the most surprising part of the affair, for it is related that all nature was convulsed as if in horror at his blasphemy, and that he, who had boasted that legions of angels were ready to protect him, died shrieking that he was forsaken by God.

O dear reader, whenever you are tempted by Satan to commit the horrible sin of blasphemy, may you never forget the sad life and horrible death of the notorious blasphemer J. C.

LUCIANUS.

A Dream.

ONE night, as on my bed I slept
In a semi-conscious doze,
Strange visions o'er my slumbers crept,
Changed were life's wrongs and woes.

I dreamt hypocrisy and cant,
Of which we had no dearth,
And all religious row and rant
Had vanished from the earth.

I dreamt the parson's god was "cash,"
And, when folks saw the fraud,
The priests and parsons came to "smash"—
Forgot their "God" to laud,

And turned to work like honest men,
To earn their daily bread;
Ah, "work was worship" truly then,
Tho' ne'er a prayer was said.

And where the parsons preached and prayed,
The church with spire and steeple,
Each edifice, a place was made
To educate the people.

The farmer ceased his tithes to pay,
Long squeezed from him unduly;
Said he, "I'll be as good as they,
And never prove unruly."

Soon all the prisons smaller grew,
Asylums were unknown,
And workhouses, converted too,
To schools of art were grown.

For poverty, that crime of crimes,
And cries of keen distress,
And sad complaints of hard, hard times
Gave place to happiness.

Religious sects and parties ceased
To wrangle and to fight;
And bitter hate and strife decreased
For love of truth and right.

And heresy was looked upon
As honest doubt should be;
Justice was granted every one,
And thought and speech were free.

In joy and transport I awoke,
But sterner visions came;
My dream had ended all in "smoke"
And earth was still the same.

B. KNOWLES.

"AMANDA, I wish you to put the large Bible in a prominent place on the centre table, and place three or four hymn-books carelessly round on the sofas. I have advertised for a young man to board in a cheerful Christian family, and I tell you what, if you girls don't manage one of you to catch him, why I'll never try anything again, for I am tired out."

SAMMY went to see his grandfather, a pious old gentleman, who was wont to discourse much to young Samuel upon divine things. The lad, while taking a drive one day in his grandfather's carriage, after sitting for a moment in silence, inquired: "Is God everywhere?"—"Yes, my child."—"Is he in this carriage?"—"Certainly he is."—"Then all I've got to say is that he's having a jolly drive."

Comic Answers to Correspondents.

- SALVATION DICK.**—Christ's riding into power in Jerusalem on asses was a type. How strikingly it has been fulfilled! Let us pray.
- PETER.**—As to the cock-crowing nuisance you should summons the unfeeling wretch who has so little consideration for your feelings.
- JERUSALEM NED.**—We may remind you that there were several asses among the apostles, namely Jud-as, and Thom-as, and afterwards Matthi-as. There was also a second Jud-as among the twelve, but sensitive Christians have arbitrarily altered his name to Jude, so that no book of the New Testament may appear under the ominous name of Saint Judas.
- FORTY DAYS' FAST.**—No. What we are surprised at is the moderation of the writer. Forty years could have been written just as easily as forty days. Perhaps this lengthened fasting happened during the forty years' wanderings in the desert without boots or clothes wearing out.
- IMITATIO CHRISTI.**—You want to imitate Christ. Well, Christ went to hell, so the Apostles' Creed tells us.
- LINGUISTIC LEARNER.**—Your translation of *le grand peut-être* as the big potato is too materialistic for our columns.
- RAW UMBER.**—It was Catherine of Sienna who wished to go to hell to prevent others from entering. If her prayer had been granted, she might have been known as Catherine of (Burnt) Sienna.
- GENTLE INQUIRER.**—Types are of many kinds. Jesus evidently had a Jewish nose as a fore-ordained type and prophetic assurance of his being a great conk-eror. This was God's method of producing conviction in the minds of the saints. Christ was also born in a stable as an evident prophecy of the stable nature of his power, and among asses to indicate its source and origin.
- DETECTOR OF PIOUS FRAUDS.**—It is an old English writer who observes that God-lie-ness is great gain.
- DEACON MONEYBAGS.**—The clergy believe in a purse-onal God, the trinity of £ s. d. Holy Ghost in the original Greek is but *πνευμα*, that is breath or wind. An outpouring of the Holy Ghost is but a clerical equivalent or expedient for raising the wind.
- COCKNEY STREET-PREACHER.**—The "Hammerites" as you called them in your oration were not blacksmiths, nor was Jael one of them. When Ezekiel (xvi, 3) said, "Thy father was an Amorite and thy mother a Hittite," he evidently thought the genealogy he attributed to Jerusalem was a striking one.
- INSPIRED ETYMOLOGIST.**—You are wrong in several of your conclusions. The Athan-Asian Creed does not truly indicate the place of origin in its name, for it arose in Africa. The Sab-bath was not originally a weekly tubbing as you imagine. Moses fixed peoples' minds on higher matters than personal cleanliness.
- SOLOMON.**—Your love song is unfit for our columns. It may be, as you say, no worse than the details of the Colin Campbell Divorce case; but two blacks don't make one white.
- POOR OLD JOE.**—If you can prove the paternity of Gabriel or of the soldier Pandora, you will not be responsible for the child's maintenance, but it is no use bringing an action against a ghost.
- SAINT JOHN THE DIVINE.**—Your liver is evidently out of order. Try Thwaites's pills.

Rib Ticklers.

AN Hibernian gentleman, when told by his nephew that he had just entered college with a view to the Church, said, "I hope that I may live to hear you preach my funeral sermon."

"I HAVE heard, friend Young," said a Quaker to a reverend gentleman, "that thou wouldst not bury a Dissenter." "You're misinformed," replied the other, "I should be happy to bury them all."

HOSTESS: "What has become of Sandy Smith, who stood so high in your class?" Alumnus: "Oh, he has taken orders some time." Hostess: "He's in the ministry?" Alumnus: "No; in a restaurant."

"Do you see any difference in Neighbor Pearce since he joined the church?" "Yes; formerly when he went to work in his garden on Sunday morning he carried his tools on his shoulder, now he carries them under his overcoat."

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

IT sounds comical to hear a fashionable congregation, singing: "Jesus, I my cross have taken, all to leave and follow Thee!" Think of a woman with a silk gown on and a stuffed bird in her hat, standing up and singing, "Naked, poor, despised, forsaken, Thou from hence my all shall be!"

THEY tell in Brattleboro of a clergyman who refused to take meat of his butcher because it had been killed on Sunday. A few days later the preacher told the butcher that he wanted some meat. "I haven't any to sell you," said that conscientious man, "I have stopped receiving money that is earned on a Sunday."

"JOHN," said the grocer to his assistant, as they opened the store early Sunday morning; "the parson says it's wicked to do any unnecessary work on Sunday." "Yes, sir." "Well, you needn't wet that sugar until to-morrow. It can lay over just as well; besides it weighs a great deal more just after you wet it. I do'n't believe in breaking the Sabbath unnecessarily."

"THIS is the Jewish New Year," observed Mr. Snaggs on that anniversary. "Why, when was the Jewish Christmas?" asked Mrs. Snaggs, "I didn't know it had passed."

"KEEP quiet, Charley; God won't hear the minister's prayer if you make so much noise," said a fond mother endeavoring to keep her child still in a city church last Sunday.

"Now, Tommy, you remember that Lot's wife was changed to a pillar of salt because she turned and looked back. Why did she turn and look back?" "Oh, I s'pose some other woman passed her with a new dress on."

THE Rev. Dr. Lorimer, a well-known Baptist clergyman, tells this story of himself:—"When in London, a few weeks ago, I visited the fish market and asked the name of a peculiarly ugly fish that lay on the counter. 'We call them Baptists,' replied the dealer. 'Baptists!' I rejoined, 'why Baptists?' 'Because,' he answered, 'they go to the bad soon after they come out of the water!'"

THE new baby had proved itself the possessor of extraordinary vocal powers and had exercised them, much to Johnny's annoyance. One day he said to his mother: "Ma, little brother came from heaven, didn't he?" "Yes, dear." Johnny was silent for some time, and then he went on: "Say, ma." "What is it, Johnny?" "I don't blame the angels for getting rid of him, do you?"

THE new minister, making his rounds, called at a farm-house, and in conversation remarked in the usual way: "Of course, you hold family worship every night?" "Oh, yes," said the farmer, "in the season—that is the summer-time." "And why don't ye hold it in the winter?" said the minister. "Weel," said the farmer, "there's candles, etc., to pay for, and I'm no just shure that the profits would cover the expense."

A COUNTRY vicar was complimenting a tailor in his parish on repairs which he had done for him. In the course of conversation, however, he incautiously observed, "When I want a new coat, I go to London—they make them there." Before leaving the shop he inquired, "By-the-bye, do you come to my church?" "No," was the reply; "when I want to hear a good sermon, I go to London—they make them there!"

POOR LUCK LIKELY.—A country minister while driving to church discovered a small boy by the roadside with a fishing-rod over his shoulder. He drew up his horse and said reprovingly, "Going fishing on Sunday, my boy?" "Yes," answered the lad, "are you goin' fishin' too?" "I am fishing for souls," said the good man, solemnly. "For soles? Well, yar won't ketch no soles 'round here, mister. I'm fishin' for suckers."

A CLERGYMAN of a town in Yorkshire met a little boy of his acquaintance on a tramcar, and said to him, "This is quite a stormy day, my son." "Yes, sir," said the boy, "this is a very wet rain." The clergyman, thinking to rebuke such tautology, asked if he ever knew of other than wet rain. The boy answered that he never knew personally of any other, but he had read in a book of a time when it rained fire and brimstone, and he thought that was not a wet rain.

JOHNNY ON MIRACLES.—Little Johnny Jordan was a passenger on a suburban train. Beside him sat a tall, solemn-looking man with side whiskers. In front were Johnny's pa and ma, and his aunt Hetty. The whole party had been to church, and the man sitting beside Johnny was the minister going out to spend the afternoon with the Jordans. "My little man," said the minister to Johnny, "did you pay close attention to the sermon?" "Yessir." "Do you remember that I said something about miracles?" "Yessir." "Well, Johnny, do you know what a miracle is?" "Yessir." "Tell me, please." "Well, all I know about it is ma said this morning that it would be a miracle if we could go to church once without havin' the minister taggin' home with us to dinner. So I guess this hain't no mir"—"Johnny Jordan! [from the front seat]. Will you come here this minute?" "Yes'm."

"Die Monche vom Johannisberg."

THE monks of old Johannisberg
Were merry red-faced swillers;
The chapel cloisters narrow ran,
But wide the cloister cellars.
Such wine as their's ne'er tasted was
By monarch—good or evil;
"Long life!" they drank, and psalms and prayers.
Were banished to—the Devil!

The monks of old Johannisberg
Raged with a thirsty fever;
They "pulled" their liquor often, but
The chapel bell ropes—never!
The cellar door would open wide,
Without a sound—ne'er fear it!
The chapel-gate might creak for aye,
But d— them if they'd hear it!

A. G. (From the German.)

SACRED WIDDLES.

How do we know that the long message God sent to the author of the Book of Lamentations was untrue?—Because it was for-gery (for Jerry).

How do we know that Zaccheus was hard up when he saw Jesus?—Because the Bible describes him as being up a tree.

What relation was the hero of the ass's jawbone to the great Samuel?—He was Sam's-son (Samson), of course.

Why was the whale that put itself outside Jonah quite unlike the few Socialists who happen also to be capitalists?—Because it disgorged its ill-gotten prophet.

How do we know that Peter was only a freshwater sailor or fisherman?—If he had been a sea-faring man he would have been called Salt-Peter.

How do we know there are no women in heaven?—Because St. John says there was silence in heaven for the space of half an hour.

Why are Spurgeonites like the Salvationists?—The one sect has a big Tabernacle, and the other a great Booth.

What is the difference between Sir William Armstrong's house and the Holy Land?—The one is a Tyne palace and the other Palestine.



GOD IN A PARACHUTE.

And the Lord came down to see the city and the tower, which the children of men builded.—GEN. XI, 5.

When Christ was sold for 30s., what was the difference between him and the province he was in?—One was a dear Jew, and the other Judæa.

Which of the ten plagues bore some resemblance to a wide-awake hat?—That of darkness which might be felt.

How do we know that God the Trinity is out of his mind?—Because he is always beside himself.

What is the only difference between a clergyman and a blind man leading the blind?—The only difference is that he is a blind man leading a lame 'un (layman).

What is the difference between aristocrats and saints?—The one set go in for rank and the other for rancor.

Why is a clergyman like Lord Nelson?—Because the last thing Nelson did was to die for his country, and that's about the last thing a clergyman would think of doing.

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