

FUN OFFICE, Wednesday, Nov. 22, 1876.

QUESTION!

As the time is swiftly speeding,
Time for Peace's interceding,
And for Mercy's special pleading
'Gainst the woes of war,—
We would ask, Is ours the Crescent?
Or is ours the Christian peasant?
In our action at the present
Which is England for?

As a war exterminating
In its action, is but waiting
Till the conferential prating
Makes a patch-work new:
As, in spite of intercessions,
War must follow on aggressions—
What becomes of our professions?
What will England do?

WHILE congratulating the captain of the *Franconia* on his narrow escape, and regretting that another of the claims of Britannia has gone by the board—as if the *Vanguard* and the *Thunderer* and the *Mistletoe* and the *Shah* experiences in that line were not enough—we may, just to give us surcease of sorrow, call attention to a line of the Lord Chief Justice's. He says, in effect, that writers on international law base their statements on certain treaties which are non-existent, or which, on being referred to, have quite a different construction from that put upon them by the writers. Well, my Lord Chief Justice of England, this can hardly be novel to you, for even to us it is evident that a large proportion of "authorities," from the Bar at Westminster to that at the Discussion For rum, create their facts as they go on, for the purpose of substantiating their arguments. This is admirable on both sides, as far as it goes. The only fear in the matter is that one of these days the Sovereign People as well as Discussion Hall proprietorial victualers, may take it into their heads, and in turn create their own "authorities." There might then be a little less law and a good deal less discussion: but no one will dare say that either the public or the publicans would be any the worse off. As the great and good Captain Bunsby would say, "The moral of this here lies in the application."

THE Charity Organisation Society has published a long and exhaustive reply to the charges brought by "Veta" in a letter to the *Times*. And it must be admitted that the society comes much better out of the business than many expected it would, ourselves included. It is only fair to admit this. But to our thinking, the claims of poverty should be met by a Charitable Society with Charity, and not with an investigation of character and pedigree from which the best among us might shrink. Nobody expects a poor starving wretch who has "seen better days" to be immaculate. The matter lies in a nutshell. Investigation is not beneficence, nor is beneficence investigation. Nor can the two things be mixed under one head. And so, though the Charity Organisation Society may be doing the greatest of all possible good, it is bound to be regarded with disfavour, and to be always suspected, however unjustly, of sailing under false colours, while it continues to base so large a share of its importance on the noble and ever-unsuspecting work of simple *Charity*.

AN ATONEMENT.

"A well-known Publisher of Novels has invented a Bedstead."—*Vita Press*.
It is meet that the man who these books can produce,
"Modern novels" whose plots slowly creep on,
Should force the effect that his wares may produce,
And present the world something to sleep on.

A Right Merrie Geste.

THE Premier has been staying at Ingestre Hall, Staffordshire. Mrs. Juggins wants to know if he was made for the place or the place for him. We think the Hall was originally intended for the residence of Joseph Miller, Esq. What the Premier was originally intended for, who will dare say! (At the moment of going to press we are informed that the *g* is hard Ingestre. Well, well, so's the *j* in jest.)

Eau Loire!

GREAT scarcity of water prevails at St. Etienne (Loire), and the Mayor has, therefore, suspended the supply to private houses, in order that the public fountains may work, or rather play. The result will hardly be Gauling to the Frenchman's mind or skin.

WHEN a donkey's in the Pound he's more than ever a Quod-ruped.

INCONTROVERTIBLE FACTS.

(By a MEDIUM.)

HERE is nothing more certain to destroy the effect of a serious story than absurd comic pictures, such as disfigure this page. The author of this has begged in vain that these frightful caricatures might not be dotted among the text. I am sorry too that this tale should have been printed in a comic paper, as nine readers out of ten will be apt to begin the perusal of it with the idea that they will find in it some of that flippancy which distinguishes comic papers. There is no intended flippancy in this, for I am thoroughly convinced of the utter truth of everything related in it. If the following account of things actually experienced shall have the effect of opening the eyes of only one reader to the atrocity of the persecution lately directed against spiritualistic mediums; and of convincing one mind that spiritual phenomena are not altogether a delusion; it will not have been written in vain.

There can be, in the mind of any thinking person, no doubt whatever that the experiences undergone by my friend B— were intended as a punishment for his unjustifiable derision of the Spirit-world. A hard-headed, mercenary man-of-the-world, he had once made no scruple at expressing his loud contempt whenever the subject of Spiritualistic phenomena happened to be mooted; and his opinions on the subject were fully endorsed by the majority of his acquaintances. For he had the misfortune—the unbelieving will deride the word—to move amid a circle of men of his own stamp; stockbrokers, merchants, manufacturers; all hard-headed men-of-the-world, like himself, to whom the word "ghost" was a term to scoff at. When I first came across him he was carrying on a successful business in the importation of burnt cork, and I was a mouse-trap and nail-brush broker on a large scale. I remember, even at that time, that we two had many a conversation on "spiritual" subjects, but the dialogues invariably ended the same way; namely, in the dismissal of the subject as a delusion fit only for nursemaids and shop-boys. It was some years before it began to dawn upon me that there might possibly be two sides to the question, but by degrees I did begin to ponder upon the subject more deeply, and was at last induced to attend a seance in order to ascertain the truth. That seance greatly shook my disbelief; and I went to other seances with the result of absolute and unreserved conversion to the doctrines of Spiritualism. With this faith firmly fixed in my mind I went to the City and looked over my accounts, but these accounts were not cheery to contemplate.



It was possibly owing to my mind being so absorbed by the subject of Spiritualism that the balance appeared to me to be entirely on the wrong side of my ledger. I say it must have been in consequence of my vision being so dimmed by Spiritualism that my credit in the City seemed to be collapsing; but, anyhow, in a few weeks more I yielded up my whole City concern into the hands of my creditors and took to Spiritualism as a profession—entirely from conviction—entirely from devotion to the holy cause of Truth. Freed from the trammels of harassing business complications I was now enabled to devote my mind to the Spirits, and I lost no time in taking a couple of rooms near Russell-square and setting up in business



—(ahem! the expression escaped me unpremeditatedly!)— as a medium. I soon began to make a very good thing of it—I mean to say that I succeeded in making many converts to the faith, and a glance at my ledger now—but I will not drag in worldly matters.

How ardently and unremittently I tried to convert my friend B—! My persuasion was all in vain, and he continued in his burnt-cork business in spite of all my glowing pictures of enormously increased prof—but never mind that. I had (subserviently, of course, to my passion for the TRUTH) a keen perception in business matters, and I told B— repeatedly that his affairs were getting shaky, but he could never see it himself. I pointed out in particular that the necessity of settling butchers' and tailors' bills was a possible item in every man's future.

All came about as I had predicted. His affairs *did* go wrong; and, with all his bills unpaid for years back, he fled his old haunts and retired into private life. He had a most uncomfortable time of it, for he changed his place of residence at least every quarter to avoid those who were looking after him. At this time he often used to attempt to drown his sorrows in drink, obtained on credit from the nearest public-house, but after a while the supply of liquors was suddenly stopped, owing to his score having grown too long. His troubles from earthly things were hard enough to bear, but the worst had yet to come. He had offended the Spirit-World, and the Spirit-World had yet to take its revenge! And now commenced a series of phenomena marked enough (I hope) to convince the most sceptical. I took notes of the occurrences at the time, and can give them to the world precisely as they occurred.

B— had moved his furniture to a villa more secluded and less likely to be discovered by his pursuers than any of his previous places of residence. It was about three weeks after this that the first spiritual manifestation occurred, and I happened fortunately to be a witness of the occurrence. B— and I were sitting over the fire. I am positive that the mind of neither of us was at that time bent upon the subject of ghosts, and that we were in no way the victims of mental delusion. There could not possibly be trickery on the part of either of us, for (as I have said) B— was an unbeliever, and, as for me, I was sitting in a position quite isolated from the spot where the demonstration was to occur. My right hand was in my pocket, my left thumb inserted beneath the arm-hole of my waistcoat, my eyes were fixed on the fire. As we sat we distinctly heard a rapping sound, *apparently in the front of the house*; we listened, the sound continued and became more pronounced.

Following the direction of the sound, we traced it to the front door—the rapping was proceeding from the front door, apparently about half way up or a little higher. The sound grew more hurried, as if prompted by anger or excitement.

We at once decided not to open the door. Now notice! In an interval of the rapping we distinctly hear a voice.

It muttered something which my friend and I are prepared to swear sounded very like "Little Bill." It was evident, then, that the demonstrations proceeded from a spirit of that name.

Suddenly the rapping ceased, and there came a low angry muttering which seemed to die away in the distance.

B— and I then barred and locked the door, and piled some furniture against it, in order that none might be able to approach it on the inside to tamper with it, as we wished to give the spirits fair play. Next day the noise was repeated with greater vehemence, and we distinctly heard several voices. On this and subsequent occasions, too, the sharp rapping sound high up in the door was accompanied by a heavier banging at intervals, a few inches above the level of our feet. I am prepared to swear that these phenomena occurred at irregular intervals for a week.

On the third day we distinctly saw, lying half under the door, a slate with characters upon it! On the left hand side were a column of dates and some names of spirituous liquors; on the right hand side was a column of figures! This slate is in my possession now, and can be inspected (admission two-and-sixpence; dark séance one shilling extra).

On the eighth day after the occurrence of the first demonstration, the furniture began to move visibly, and this was done without any assistance or even volition on the part of my friend B—. It was even done in direct opposition to his will! In a few hours after this, all my friend's furniture had entirely disappeared.

I think I have said enough to crush disbelief.

Legal.

If Dr. Darwin will take the trouble to search the parish registers of Faversham in Kent, he will find recorded in June last the marriage of J. Judge with A. Jury. We should like to know whether this comes under the head of natural selection, and also whether, on the principle of the grey mare, Jury should not now be considered the better Judge. Six-and-eightpence offered.



COLD COMFORT.

GREAT history teaches, and we must believe it,
Successful's the man who can "down with the dust."
If "money makes sorrow," sure coin can relieve it;
If "money brings trouble," I'd try it on trust,
And do all I know to dispel the illusion
Which somehow is found in our bosoms to dwell—
(That proverb should meet with no end of confusion):
That he who has money has sorrow as well.

If I had but money I'd cross the broad ocean,
From Pole to Equator I'd carelessly roam;
Defying dull care by the newest of notion,
For years I would wander, ne'er pining for home.
Of Eskimo's hut and New Zealander's wonder
Alike should my book upon travelling tell.
Yes, thus would I prove the assertion a blunder
That he who has money has trouble as well.

My junketting over, a natural yearning
(The yearning ability constantly brings,
I mean recognition among the discerning)
Might set me at poetry, novels, and things.
I should write like a man of position and breeding,
My advent to Swinburne might sound as a knell;
To the winds this inanity soon I'd be speeding,
That he who has money has sorrow as well.

When travelling, poetry, novel-creation,
And such like amusements had palled for a while,
Redeeming the duty one owes to his nation,
A partner I'd seek amid fashion and d style.
We'd love one another with blindest devotion,
She'd call me her hubby, I'd answer *Ma belle*,—
Together we'd laugh at the rusty old notion
That he who has money has sorrow as well.

Suppose, though, that voyaging's not all delicious;
Suppose that my novels declined to go down;
Suppose that my charmer was cold and capricious;
Suppose she did nothing but wrangle and frown!
It may be that men who have blood of the bluest
Find greatness and riches a regular sell,
So it's best to believe that of proverbs the truest
Is, he that has money has sorrow as well.

JEUX D'ESPRIT.

OF THE VERY LATEST HUMOURISTS.

CURRAN met Sydney Smith the day after Lord Mayor White's procession. "What did you think of the show, Smith?" asked the former. "Thought it was extremes meeting," answered the captious Dean. "Hired elephants and hired flies."

Paulton, the famous dramatic author, was invited by Garrick to write a ballet with plenty of smart dialogue in it, for the present lessee of Drury Lane. "Oh, I see," said the author-actor-wag; "you want a ton o' chatter for Chatterton."

Sir John Bennett was one day taking riding lessons of Ducrow, who congratulated the curly-headed knight on his youthful appearance. "You appear to defy time," he exclaimed, as Sir John took the last paper hoop with agility. "No, Ducrow," was the ready answer. "I sell it, that's all."

Douglas Jerrold, hearing it asserted that there was a lot of fire in Swinburne's verse, said he didn't think there could be much, or his muse would be more suggestive of Burns and Browning.

Acidity.

AN unrehearsed performance of the Sanatorium scena from *Miss Gwilt* has been given with some success in Shrewsbury Gaol. Carbonic acid gas was introduced into the cells with the splendid result of one dead character and nine insensible. How to maintain our prisoners at the smallest cost to the community has long been a problem. Here we have its solution. Gas main tain 'em, and say they died from over 'eating.

O! H. M. S.!

A CONTEMPORARY revives the rumour that the African Filibuster's real name is Jenkyns, and that he is a Welshman. Perhaps it will leak out in time that the connection of ideas between his national emblem and his assumed name suggested the latter. It isn't such a wide jump from on-I-on to on-Stanley-on.