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REV. I. E. BILL,

"Glory to God in the highest, and on earth Peace, good will toward Men."

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Elegant Ballad.

'Twas on a cliff, whose rocky base
Baffled the briny wave;
Whose cultured height, their verdant store
To many a tenant gave.

A mother, led by rustic cares,
Had wandered with her child;
Unweaned the babe—yet on the grass
He frolicked, and he smiled.

With what delight the mother glowed
To mark the infant's joy;
How oft would pause amid her toil
To contemplate her boy.

Yet soon by other cares estranged,
Her thoughts the child forsook;
Careless he wandered on the ground,
Nor caught his mother's look.

Cropped with each flower, that met his eye,
The scrambling o'er the green,
He gained the cliff's sheltered edge,
And pleased, surveyed the scene.

'Twas now the mother, from her toil,
Turned to behold her child;
The urchin gone!—her cheeks were flushed—
Her wandering eye was wild.

She saw him on the cliff's rude brink—
Now careless peeping o'er—
He turned, and to his mother smiled,
Then sported as before.

Sunk was her voice—'twas vain to fly—
'Twas vain the brink to brave—
O Nature! it was thine alone
To prompt the means to save.

She tore her kerchief from her breast,
And laid her bosom bare;
He saw, delighted—left the brink,
And sought to banquet there.

[Written for the Visitor.]
THE INTERDICT.

The Roman Church had no more powerful weapon than its terrible "interdict." On account of its terrific nature it was seldom resorted to except when all other means to reduce a sovereign to obedience had failed. This never failed. Had there been other religions existing in countries visited by it—they might in some measure have increased, and compensating the people for the suspension of the Catholic services, they would probably have occupied its deserted place. But no other religion did exist. The Roman Catholic faith was then thoroughly "Catholic," and the interdict could be used with impunity. When the first message came from the Pope that an interdict was proclaimed, that for a time the kingdom on account of its disobedience should be rendered destitute of all religious services, it seemed to the people that they were utterly deserted by God. And then ensued a scene of terror, such as nations seldom behold; a scene of most dismal misery and appalling gloom. For a famine, a pestilence, an invasion, the tyranny of despotic kings or the evils of anarchy,—all these separately and together might be endured. They were temporal evils and the man afflicted by them could turn his thoughts to the world beyond. But what an utter loss of hope was there—what despair—what misery—when the hope of this world beyond, the expectations of heavenly consolation, the pure anticipations of future happiness, were in one moment snatched from them! For all believed that the nation visited by an interdict had no more claim to the care of the Deity. God had deserted it, and His providence, His merciful presence was removed far from them.

At the command of the Pope, every religious service was at once stopped. The churches were closed. The clergy retired from their walls, and the daily services, the prayer in the sanctuary, the sabbath devotions, continued no longer. Men walked by the chapel, but it was closed. The tones of the

organ and the voices of the chanting monks were hushed. The doors of the confessional were shut to all, there was no confession of sins, no need of repentance—for it would not avail—no hope of absolution.

But this was not all. The wrathful blow was not stayed here. Its effects were evident throughout all the ramifications of social life. There were no marriages, for the priest was forbidden to perform any service whatever. Those who had been possibly long and impatiently waiting for a union, found that there were no means of fulfilling their desires. God was no longer present to approve of the holy ordinance. They must wait; they must remain in patience, until the disobedient kingdom (or rather king) should repent.

This was bad enough, but there were sufferings still more unendurable. For those who desire to be married may wait in hope of a better time; but the dead, the lifeless corpse cannot wait for its interment. It must be buried, and these burials must go on continually. Men therefore must be buried like dogs, without the service of the church, without the prayers or masses for their souls. This in an age so far more penetrated with superstition, and if you please, with reverence for sacred things, than our own, produced feelings which can scarcely be fully understood by us.

The churches were closed. Marriages were not performed. The dead were buried without any service. There was no help. High and low, rich and poor, old and young, all of whatever age or sex, were pressed down to the earth beneath so heavy a weight of afflictions. No help for it did we say? Yes there was one way, one only way of escape. Repentance and humiliation before that Holy Church which had been offended. It was the king who had offended. Why did he not repent? To do so would restore a nation's happiness. So the people unable and unwilling to endure what was put upon them, naturally became discontented, rebellious, insurrectionary. They clamoured for peace with the church on any terms.

And what during this time was the situation of the king? Deplorable. He not only had to endure all the evils which afflicted the people, but every other one incident to the peculiarity of his situation. He was compelled to witness their misery, to hear their clamors for obedience to the Pope, to endure the terrors of anticipated rebellion. But there was one thing which made his situation more terrible than that of any in the nation, the terrors of which more of his subjects knew—terrors sufficient almost to drive one mad! The king was under the ban—the fearful ban of the middle ages!

This was the nature of his situation. He was an outlaw from the church, accused of God, the divine right to rule was his no longer, and his people were no longer obliged to obey him. They were released from their oath of allegiance, and might choose any other man as their sovereign. Rebellion against such a one was not sinful. On the contrary it was meritorious, for he was a wretch and the accursed of God.

This united, with the miseries which they endured inclined the people to rebel. Anarchy arose, and rebellion spread through the land. The woes which afflicted the king both externally and internally form an accumulation such as no man ever has resisted, and such as none ever can under like circumstances. Hence the interdict could not possibly have a long duration. The king was compelled to humble himself; not slightly, not in a small degree—but to humble himself in the dust, to stoop to the very lowest depths of—not humiliation—but degradation. After that, he was restored to favour. Woe to the king then who dared in those days to withstand the Pope! His downfall was no less certain than

terrible. Witness Frederic Barbatossa, the proudest of monarchs. Witness also Philip Augustus of France, and John king of England. Their debasement is graven deep in the records of history, and remains there the wonder of all future time.

X.

Great Railroad Speed.

A paper was lately read, says the Scientific American, by Judge Meigs, before the American Institute Farmers' Club, at New York, upon the subject of rapid railroad travelling, in which he said:—

"I have, with others, admired the progress made in velocity on railroads, up to even one hundred miles an hour on straight rails, which has been done in England. But I entertain views of railroad velocity, far beyond any yet ventured to be expressed. The Emperor of Russia has taken the first great step towards what I deem to be the ultimatum of railroad travel.

Instead of cutting a narrow alley through the country, or going around everything in the way of a straight line—he has cut a broad way five hundred miles, from St. Petersburg to Moscow—he has made it all the way two hundred feet wide, so that the engineer can see everything that comes on the road.

Such is part of future; the railroad from point to point a mathematical line; the rails ten times stronger than any now used; the locomotives on wheels of far greater diameter, say 12 or 15 feet; the gauge of a relative breadth; the signals and times perfectly settled; the road, walled on both sides, during the transit of trains having the gates of the walls all closed. Then instead of one hundred miles an hour, we shall safely travel three hundred miles an hour! I will not pretend now to say more—one hundred seems fast enough; so did twenty a few years ago; and now, on very straight rails, or some straight runs, we do travel sixty miles an hour in this State, and in England one hundred miles have been accomplished.

Mathematical precision and time will solve this problem—a passage from New York to San Francisco in ten hours!"

We have no doubt of one hundred mile an hour being a perfectly practicable railroad speed, by the building of such railroads as those described by the Judge, and this opinion we expressed in the columns of the Scientific American some years ago. But 300 miles an hour inclines us to the foggy side of the question. This speed would require a piston velocity of 3,000 feet per minute, of eighteen inch stroke, if the driving wheels were 24 feet in circumference—nearly 8 feet in diameter—whoppers—and they would have to make 1,100 revolutions per minute. As the wheels cannot turn round without steam, the query with us is, the means of raising the steam necessary to perform this feat, as the boiler would have to evaporate near a ton of water per minute—sixty in an hour. So far as it relates to the final velocity of steam in a vacuum, the speed of 300 miles an hour could be obtained, but how can such a quantity of steam be evaporated in a locomotive boiler, in this space of time? Judge Meigs may perhaps be able to answer us. With respect to the velocity of bodies, our ideas are bounded by what has been performed before our eyes—the flight of the swallow, the pigeon, the eagle; but when we look to the heavenly bodies, and calculate the awful velocity with which they are unceasingly whirled through space, the mind is struck with solemn awe at the mighty power of the great Creator, who has made huge Jupiter to revolve once on his axis in ten hours, and through space at the rate of 4,635 miles an hour, or 15 times the velocity of a locomotive running at the rate of 300 miles an hour.

A Scene from real Life.

We copy the following from the "Five Points Monthly Record," a journal devoted to the interests of the Mission established in the locality whose name it bears, by the Rev. Mr. Pease. The narrative illustrates the character of the work which Mr. Pease is doing there, for religion, for purity, and for temperance.

"A few Sabbath since, at morning service, one of the most degraded specimens of humanity that ever greeted my vision, came staggering into the Chapel of the House of Industry. His wild and frightful looks, ragged and dirty beyond description, his face bruised and swollen, rendered him an object of disgust and terror. He seemed to look at the children with wonderful interest, occasionally muttering to himself—'Beautiful beautiful! Oh! that mine were here!' He sat an hour or more, and then with a long earnest look at the children, staggered out of the chapel, and went up to the dark valley of the shadow of death.—Cow Bay.

"As the bell rang for service in the afternoon, and while the children were clustering together, the same wild looking man staggered a once more. He surveyed the faces of the children with the closest scrutiny, and at length his eyes rested on two bright-eyed little girls, who were singing one of their little hymns. He sat immovable as a statue during the whole service, gazing intently on the faces of these two children.

"The service closed, the congregation dispersed, yet he lingered, and the tears came coursing down his face, thick and fast.

"Dr. S—asked him, 'what was the matter?'

"I am a drunkard! A wretch—an outcast, homeless, and without a penny. Once I had a home and friends—father, mother, wife, children and a host of friends who loved and respected me. Time passed on and I became a drunkard. One friend after another left me; still I drank on, and down, down I fell. Father and mother, both went down to their graves with broken hearts. My poor wife clung to me when all others deserted me. I still drank on, pawned one article after another, until all was gone, and when my wife refused to give me her wedding ring, which she had clung to with the tenacity of a death grasp, I felled her to the earth, seized her finger, tore off the ring and pawned it for rum. That fatal blow maddened her, and in despair, she, too, drank, and together we wallowed in the gutter.

"Penniless we begged our way from Vermont to the great city. Here we hired a small cellar, in a dark, dismal street, and sent our children out to beg. Many a weary day we spent in that dreary cellar, while our children were wandering in the streets begging for their drunken parents. About forty days since my little girls went out to beg, and from that hour to this I have not seen them.

"Without food or fire I clung to my dismal abode, until hunger forced me out, and then I began to search for my children. My degraded wife has been sent to Blackwell's Island, as a vagrant, and alone I went to the Islands, to the House of Refuge, to the Tombs, and in despair I wandered to the Five Points, and for the last few days I have lived in Cow Bay, among beggars and thieves. To-day I saw two children, who, if they had not looked so clean, and sung so sweetly, I would have called mine. Oh! would to God they were!"

"Tell me the name," said Dr. S., "and I will see." In a few moments two interesting little girls were led towards him. At the first sight of this fearful looking man, they shrank back. The poor man sprang on his feet, exclaiming, "They are mine, mine! My children, don't you know your poor old father?—come to me, my children. Father loves