

RELIGIOUS ATROCITIES.

In a most interesting letter to the *Spectator* the terrible story is told of the Arab martyr, Geronimo, who, after intolerable tortures had liquid plaster poured over him and was built up alive in the Fort des Vingt-quatre Heures, in Algiers. After three hundred years, during which the tale was gradually treated (like most tales of human cruelty), as a romance, the wall was taken down, and he was found. Plaster-of-Paris was thrown into the mould, and the life-size figure of Geronimo appeared, and is now to be seen in the museum. His crime was having been a convert to Christianity, and the demon who decreed his punishment—one Euldj Ali—is spoken of by the correspondent in question as he deserves. It is a pity, however, that the records of religious cruelty are so rarely commented upon by persons of the same faith as the miscreant who inflicts them. It is to the Bishop of Gloucester (in 1706) that we are indebted for the most terrible scene ever described in a letter, of that auto-da-fé at Lisbon where the men and women “after an hour in the flames, appeal to the King sitting close by in his opera-box for more faggots to end their tortures; and he denies them. What is wanted is denunciation of such hideous crimes from the right quarter, but we never get it. It is not the Calvinist that expresses his horror at the burning of Servetus. There is a certain theological blackguardism which seems to cling to every faith, and is never wholly got rid of by its disciples, however subsequently civilized. We all know how difficult it is to blame, even for atrocities, persons who take our own view in secular matters. Thus it happens that mutilators of cattle go unpunished, and dynamiters are spoken of as “political offenders,” and but for the fact that religious cruelty is a contradiction in terms—a breach of the very law that it would maintain—it is not surprising that the same weakness should be exhibited by theologians. But in the present growth of scepticism that is admitted on all hands—and one cause of which is unquestionably the crimes that have been committed in the name of religion—it would not, perhaps, be out of place if religious parties of all kinds should express their abhorrence of the various atrocities which, when their forefathers had the upper hand, they inflicted on their fellow-creatures. In the old days it was ascribed to zeal; at a later date to fanaticism; and surely the time has

now arrived when they might confess that the plea of doing such things “for the love of God” was a mere blasphemous pretence for the indulgence of brutal natures, impatient of contradiction, and swift to slay when they could not convince. It is strange that we have not had one word from any of them, in their corporate capacity, to this effect, though a good many from their rivals, whose conduct in the same good old times was just as bad.—*James Payne, in Illustrated London News.*

THERE is a young clergyman in the city of New York (only twenty-seven years old), who, if he keeps his head level and his heart devoted, is likely to make a stir in the world. Rev. Hugh Frice Hughes thinks that “he already has the ear of the manhood of America to a greater extent than anybody else.” He compares him with Spurgeon in his youthful days, and says he “is the living embodiment of the convictions, ideals and methods by which Christianity will yet triumph in the civilized world.” Here is a specimen of his style of utterance, and a fair sample of his pulpit truths:

“The Christianity that does not reach the masses reaches nobody. It is a caricature. It is a farce. It is a swindle. It is a stench in the nostrils of the Father of humanity. The sooner we tear down such churches, split them into kindling wood, and grind them into concrete, the better. The better for the church. The better for truth. The better for organic religion. The better for man. Such social clubs, masquerading under the sacred name of the Christ, the Son of Man, the Man of the people, the despised Nazarene, the Son of the carpenter, only crucify Him afresh. They are a curse. They cumber the ground. Standing out-and-out as social clubs for the exchange of social courtesies, they might be the vehicle of divine influence. But standing as churches, pretending to be the organic embodiment of the regenerating Spirit of the living God, they are unmitigated humbugs. The sooner we learn this the better.”—*The American Methodist.*

LET us suppose the existence of a thousand hells; yet there is nothing like this saying of the Lord—to be banished from His glory and His blessedness! To be accursed in His sight, and to hear from His lips, “I know you not!”—*Anon.*