

THE EXECUTION OF FATHER SHEEHY.

MARCH 15, 1766. Wild is the morn, the rain and hail in drenching torrents fall. O'er fair Clonmel the lowering sky hangs like a funeral pall. Hushed is the cheerful, ringing laugh, a cloud rests on each brow. The shop, the square, the busy mart are all deserted now. Business no more absorbs their thoughts, nor hope of golden gains. Each voice is stilled, and through the town's death-like silence reigns. Hope having quite forsook each breast, despair usurps her place, and casts its baleful shadows o'er each frank Millenian face. Here at an open doorway a mournful form is seen, With sorrow on each feature stamped, and sad, dejected mien; And there adown the muddy street slow moves a joyless crowd, Their eyes are dimmed with bitter tears, their heads are lowly bowed, And as they wend their weary way through the deserted town, 'Tis plain to see each sturdy form with grief is weighted down; While sorrow fills each manly breast they move in silence by, Nor do they heed the howling storm or mark the frowning sky. Oh! say what deed of crime and wrong has silenced laugh and jest— What new-born grief has quenched the fires that light each Celtic breast? For sure those hardy sons of toil, inured to want and woe, Some dire misfortune has befall'n to shake their courage so. No need to tell—the surging crowd in silence holds its way. To where the fortress prison rears its form all cold and gray, And halting near the ponderous gate, half hidden by the haze, Each fixes on its massive front a melancholy gaze; For well they know within its walls, so cheerless and so grim, Thrust in a narrow loathsome cell, with fetters on each limb, Close guarded by a vengeful crowd of pampered Orange spies, The stainless patriot and priest, the gallant Sheehy, lies— Condemned by hiring judges, in the flush of youth and bloom, To meet upon the gallows high a felon's awful doom— To yield his sinless spirit forth beneath the headman's hand— His only crime that next to God he loved his native land. While files of scarlet soldiers gird the prison round about, The sheriffs on the fatal plank have led the prisoner out; And as beneath the drop he stands, his head all meekly bowed, A cry of anguish, heartfelt, deep, bursts from the gazing crowd; As fervently they bare their heads, and breathe the earnest prayer, The fatal bolt is backward drawn—his body swings in air. No more his faithful flock shall feel that ministering hand, Skilled for all time is that pure heart—the bravest in the land. His stainless soul to Heaven has fled, nor longer feels their chains, But filled with fiendish malice still, they mangle his remains; And, as though more were wanting still their rage to satiate, They place his severed bleeding head above the prison gate. Since then the passing years have failed to bridge the gulf of hate; Clonmel still holds his memory dear, still mourns his bitter fate; Still will her children execrate, until the latest day, The names of Maude and Hewitson, and perjured Moll Dunlay.

SPOILATION OF THE CHURCH. CONFISCATION NOT REFORMATION.

FACTS FROM YORKSHIRE. Alluding to an answer to a correspondent, which appeared in our last issue, our literary representative in Leeds writes as follows:— Though few will dispute the accuracy of your statement in the notices to correspondents in last week's issue, that no one without "writing himself down an ass," would dispute the plunder of Catholic church property which took place at the time of the so-called Reformation in this country, yet it is to be feared there are too many who are scarcely cognizant of the extent to which that confiscation (plunder is a better word) was carried out. The following list taken from one county (Yorkshire) will perhaps astonish not merely many Protestant readers, but in some instances also no doubt many of the orthodox readers of the Catholic Times. The names of the places given have been copied literally as they appear in the Statute Book, which will account for some of them not being spelt absolutely as they are now-a-days. They are all, however, easily recognisable, particularly to our Yorkshire readers. At North Allerton, St. James's hospital founded for poor brethren in the reign of Henry the Second, by Hugh Parnell, Bishop of Durham. At the same place a Carmelite friary, erected in 1354, by the then Bishop of Durham (Thomas Hatfield), and the Maison de Dieu, built and endowed by Richard Moore, Draper. At Nun Appleton, a Cistercian nunnery; at Arden, a Benedictine nunnery; at Nether Aulcoster, a college; at Bagley, an hospital; at Base Dale Hoton, a Cistercian nunnery; at Bawtree, an hospital, built by Robert Moreton, Esq., for the poor (1316), at Begare, a priory; at Beverly, a college built by John, Archbishop of York, in the year 700; also at the same place a house of Hospitaliers, St. Giles's hospital, a Dominican friary, and a Franciscan friary; at Bolton, an Austin priory; at Monk Bretton (near Barnsley), a Cistercian priory, founded by Adam Fitzswain, in the reign of Henry II.; at Brunnum, a Benedictine nunnery; at Burlington, an Austin priory; at Byland, a Cistercian abbey; at Corham, a Premonstratensian abbey; at Doncaster, a Franciscan friary; at Egglestone, a Premonstratensian abbey; at Elreton, a Cistercian nunnery; at Eascholt, a Cistercian nunnery; at North Ferry, an Austin priory; at Fountains (near Ripon) a Cistercian abbey (now the property of one of the most distinguished lay members of the Catholic Church, viz., the Marquis of Ripon); at Gisleburne, an Austin priory; at Gosmont, a priory; at Haltemprece, an Austin priory; at Handale, a Benedictine nunnery; at Hanehope, a Cistercian nunnery; at Hedon, an hospital; at Helag Park, an Austin priory; at Hemingburgh, a college; at Howdon, a college; at Temple Hurst, an hospital; at Joreval, a Cistercian abbey; at Keldal, a Cistercian nunnery; at Nun Kelynge, a Benedictine nunnery; at Killingwold grove, an hospital; at Kingston (upon Hull), a Cistercian priory, built by Michael de la Pole

(Earl of Suffolk), three hospitals (Grigg's, Marner's and Pole's), and a Carmelite and a Dominican friary; at Kirkstrees, a Cistercian nunnery; at Kirkstall (near Leeds), a Cistercian abbey, built by Henry de Laoy, (1147), at Knareborough, a Trinitarian friary; at Lasningby, a college; at Old Malton, a Gilbertine priory; at Little Marcle, a Benedictine nunnery; at Marton-on-Austin's priory; a Benedictine nunnery; at Melas, a Cistercian nunnery; at Middlesham, a college; at Middlesburgh, a Benedictine cell, founded in the reign of Henry the First, by Robert de Bruce; at Molesey, a Benedictine nunnery; at Nun Monkton, a Benedictine nunnery; at Mount-grace, a Cistercian priory; at Mount-St-John, a house of Hospitaliers; at Newburgh, an Austin priory; at Newland, a house of Hospitaliers; at Newton, an hospital; at Nostell, an Austin priory; built by Robert de Laoy in the reign of Henry the Second; at Ovaton, a Gilbertine priory; at Pontefract, a Cistercian priory; St. Clement's college, Knolles college and almshouse, St. Nicholas hospital, and both a Franciscan and a Dominican friary; at Rerescore, an hospital; at Ribstane, an hospital; at Richmond, a Franciscan friary, a Premonstratensian abbey, a Benedictine cell, and St. Nicholas's hospital; at Ripon, a college, built and endowed by Archbishop Alfred, in the reign of William the Conqueror, St. John's, and also Magdalen hospital; at River, a Cistercian abbey; at Rock, a Cistercian abbey; at Rosedale, a Benedictine nunnery; at Sallay, a Cistercian nunnery; at Sinninghwaite, a Cistercian nunnery; at Soath, a Benedictine cell; at Spottburgh, an hospital; at Sutton, both an hospital and college; at Swinhey, a Cistercian nunnery; at Thicket, a Benedictine nunnery; at Tickhill (near Sheffield), a college founded by Eleanor, Queen of Henry the Second; at Tockwith, an Austin cell; at Warton, an Austin priory; at Walton (near Wakefield) a Gilbertine priory; at Welle, an hospital; at Whitley, a Benedictine abbey; at Widkirk, an Austin cell; at Wilburfosse, a Benedictine nunnery; at Wykham, a Cistercian abbey at Yarum, an hospital; at York, a Cathedral, built in the year 1137, originally founded 627 by King Edwin on his conversion to Christianity, St. Mary's Benedictine abbey, St. Clement's Benedictine convent, St. Andrew's Gilbertine priory, or Christ Church, All Saints, a Benedictine cell, Bedden, or Vicaire's College, St. Sepulchre's College, St. William's College, Bout-ham hospital, Bout-ham hospital minor, Fossigate hospital, St. Nicholas's hospital, St. Peter's or Leonard's hospital, St. Thomas's hospital, an Austin friary, founded by Lord Scroop in the year 1278, a Franciscan friary founded by King Henry the Second, and a Carmelite friary founded, in the year 1225, conjointly by Lords Vesey and Percy. The above list does not include the property of noblemen and other landed proprietors who had their estates confiscated for adhering to the faith of their forefathers.—Catholic Times.

"EXTREME NATIONALISTS."

In our last number we gave expression to our belief that amongst the men who choose to be called "extreme" or "advanced" Nationalists there are many who would scorn to have any participation in scenes such as that got up by some members of their party on the occasion of the Home Rule demonstration in Limerick. We are happy to be able to point to evidence strongly confirmatory of our remarks. Amongst the extreme Nationalists of Limerick and the neighbouring counties it appears there are many who were invited to take part in that disturbance, and who firmly and indignantly refused to have anything to do with it. Some of these men, previous to the commission of the outrage, took pains to dissociate themselves from what was about to be done. They had reasoned and remonstrated with their more hot-headed compatriots but, finding they would not be dissuaded from their purpose, they took steps to save their own honour, and to prevent the repute of their party from being soiled by the contemplated atrocity. They met in council in the city of Limerick on the morning of the procession, and passed the following highly creditable resolution:— "That having been induced to come to Limerick on to-day under misrepresentations to the effect that the honour of Irish nationality was compromised in the demonstration, and having in their committee rooms conferred with the parties who intended to offer opposition to the speaking at the O'Connell statue, and having found that they had no reasonable grounds for their opposition to the meeting, we hereby declare we believe the honour of Irish Nationalists in no wise compromised in the support of the demonstration, and in the most emphatic terms we repudiate the conduct of those parties who would lower the flag of nationality by disturbing the meeting and bringing disgrace on the city of Limerick." They did still more than this. They drew up an address expressive of their feelings, and hastened to the railway platform to present it to Mr. Butt immediately on his arrival in the city. In this remarkable document, after having complimented Mr. Butt on his endeavours to obtain some instalments of Ireland's rights from the British Parliament, they proceeded to say:— "We would not have troubled you with this address but it has come to our knowledge that a small section, we know not from what cause, have put themselves forward as the Nationalists of Limerick, and have issued a placard signifying their intention of preventing you, by every means in their power, addressing your constituents, who have declared their intention of paying you a well deserved compliment upon the questions which have so much agitated the country for the past few months. We have no hesitation in declaring to you, sir, that we do not altogether agree in the following up a parliamentary agitation, as past experience has taught us to expect but very little concession from the English government. Yet we cannot, as Nationalists, debar our fellow-citizens from seeking, if they wish it, to obtain concession in a constitutional manner. And why? Because, while we would not be true or faithful to our country if we attempted by fraud or force to stifle the honest opinions of our fellow-citizens. We feel we would not be doing justice to the nationality of Ireland if with one hand we demanded freedom and with the other attempted to crush the national aspirations of our fellow-countrymen. We seek for complete freedom, and in doing so we have no inclination to pander to the arrogance of an individual. We cannot allow freedom of opinion to be trampled on. What we ask for ourselves we cannot deny to them, and we pledge our faith to you on this day that whoever interferes with the free expression of your sentiments will have our unanimous and determined opposition." The extreme Nationalists of Ireland have every right to be grateful to all concerned in preparing and voting the foregoing address and resolution. Those documents will be regarded by the public as going very far towards proving that although there may be amongst the extreme Nationalists men who entertain very wild and mischievous notions, yet the majority of the party are a more reasonable class of persons, whose minds are better informed, and who have truer ideas of public rights and national liberty. It is plain that in the pretensions set up by the party of disorder at Limerick are contained the very principles of intolerance, of tyranny, and of anarchy. If one set of men may come forth armed with sticks and stones or other weapons to suppress a public demonstration which has not their approval, why may not twenty, fifty, or a hundred little factions deny to other parties the right of a public meeting, and proceed to attack them if they attempt to exercise it? And why may not the British Government take up the game,

and bring out their soldiers and police to disperse at the point of the bayonet any assemblages that are distasteful to them? Everyone understands that there could be no peace or order under such conditions, and consequently no worse thing could happen any party, religious or political, in Ireland, than to have it believed of them that they would seek to suppress by forcible means the free expression of the opinions of other men. Therefore we say it is a good thing for the extreme Nationalists of Ireland that the intolerable pretensions, set up and the disgraceful line of conduct adopted by a few members of their party in Limerick, have been in the name of the whole party emphatically repudiated and condemned. In fact the refusal of the majority of the extreme Nationalists of Limerick to ally themselves with the disturbers, and the adoption by them of the address and resolution above referred to, turn an incident which otherwise would have been calamitous for the whole party into an occasion of positive benefit to them. The good impression created by those documents will last long and be sensibly felt in many ways, directly and indirectly, if it be not marred by injudicious language on the platform or in the press. If, in the name of the extreme Nationalists, political rowdism be defended, and the principle of judgment be written up, and the glory of a street shindy expiated upon as if it were a brilliant feat of arms, then Ireland will get some shame from such disgusting nonsense, but the greater weight of it will fall on the party in whose interest, professedly, such pestilential stuff is put before the world.—Dublin Nation.

PATRIOTS AND PATRIOTS.

Dr. Johnson in one of those savage moods, intended to exhibit his Toryism, not his scholarship defines patriotism, as "the last refuge of the scoundrel," and there can be no doubt that there have been in every age and country "patriots" to whose patriotism the gruff doctor's sarcasm would fitly apply. In Ireland we have been particularly cursed in that way. The Corydons, the Nagles, the Goulahs were all furious patriots before becoming informers, but they were scoundrels before either. But commoner than these is the scoundrel of the genteel sort, who took refuge in patriotism and nationality, and found it too, a profitable speculation. We might very easily point to numerous examples of more exalted personages, whose patriotism (of the most fervid kind whilst it lasted) came down at once to zero upon accession to the bench or some other lucrative and "respectable" position in the pay of the "Saxon and the stranger," under the "tyrannical and intolerant" Tories, or "the base, bloody, and brutal Whigs," as they had been used to designate their masters. But those latter, though perhaps the vilest are by no means the most mischievous varieties of the class we are dealing with. There is another kind of patriot, who though national and sincerely attached to his country in a kind of way, and willing to serve it after a fashion, is, and always has been nevertheless his country's greatest enemy—worse than her open foes, worse even than the secret informer. This patriot, though professing unbounded love for his country, and a willingness to sacrifice everything for it, will not in reality sacrifice for it his pettiest vanity or his smallest crochets. He does not believe in, and will not (if he can) tolerate any patriotism in another which does not recognise the paramount importance of his peculiar notions, and entirely square with his particular formula. He never pauses to consider how far the rest of his countrymen agree or disagree with it, or what are the wishes of the majority of them. It may be a question of numbers, organisation, or resources. He never compares, and does not know the comparative strength in those respects of those who share his views and those who are opposed to them. He is utterly averse to considering, and mostly incapable of estimating the adequacy of the means on his side, or the magnitude of the difficulties which lie in his way. He is the "missioned" saviour or liberator of his nation according to his own idea, and if it is not to be saved or liberated upon his plan, and in the strictest conformity with his notions, he would rather a thousand times that it be not saved or liberated at all, and would fight against his compatriots who presumed to be patriotic upon any other plan than his, with a bravery which he never dared to exhibit before the common enemy, and if he cannot rule the counsels of his friends he will do his best to ruin them. His patriotism is mostly of the braggy kind, and breathes blood, and fire, and thunder. He is always putting himself in evidence, as the French say, and never misses an opportunity of making a speech or a disturbance in order to show his importance—he is leading or intriguing. The patriots of this class have been the curse of patriotic and national movements in every country and at all times. We need not go to ancient history for examples of this type. They abound in more recent times, in fact up to our own day. In the great war of American independence they gave Washington more trouble than the whole British army. Two of the class were then particularly conspicuous—Arnold, whom jealousy and pique induced to betray the very troops which he had more than once led to victory, and the blustering brute, Burr, whose desire for leadership, murderously deprived the young Republic of her greatest statesman, Alexander Hamilton. The late French war also furnishes abundant examples of this sort of patriot. But we need not go abroad for illustrations. We have had plenty of them upon our own soil. They have cropped up at every crisis of our history, and have been the principal cause of that disunion by which the noblest efforts of our country have been marred and thwarted. The various leaders fighting for precedence before the walls of Kinsale, and thus letting slip the enemy who was in their grasp, the feud between Sarfield and Tyrconnel, the denunciation of Owen Roe by the parliament of Kilkenny are only a few of the instances which will at once recur to the mind of all familiar with the sad lessons of Irish history. We need not refer to recent cases, but every now and then we are reminded by the action of some of our patriotic friends that this kind of patriotism is capable of doing mischief yet. But we turn from it to a brighter prospect. There is another type of patriot and well for the world there is. He is the man who loves his country more than he does his own interests, his own vanity, or his own ambition. To such the world is indebted for whatever is greatest in it—whatever encourages virtue brightens history and redeems humanity. He is ready to watch and wait as he would be to do and dare; either commanding or in the ranks; acting or enduring, in whatever capacity she may call upon him he is willing to serve his country. He is jealous of her honour, careful of her fame, and watchful over her interests. He is proud of her as a son of his mother, and regards all her children as his brethren in a common nationality. If our history saddens us with examples of the vain egotistic self-seeking patriot and sham nationalist it furnishes the antidote by giving us the noblest examples of this, the patriot in the highest and purest sense, and whenever we feel dispirited at the antics of the former we have only to turn to the latter, and from the names of a Tone, an Emmet, or a Fitzgerald, of a Grattan or a Curran we can derive comfort, and renewed hope that their country will become all they strove for yet.—United Irishman.

A drummer is the fastest man in the world, because time beats all men, and the drummer beats time. Some people say that dark-haired women marry soonest. We differ: it is the light-headed ones.

SIGNS IN THE HEAVENS.

Is THE EARTH APPROACHING ITS FINAL DISSOLUTION? It is an extraordinary coincidence, to use no stronger phrase, that at the present time Dr. Cumming is by no means alone in predicting that the terrible cosmical convulsion by which our earth and its inhabitants shall pass away, will surely overtake us about September of the current year. There have been scores of this kind in the past; but they were invariably confined to one prophet and his disciples. The present heralds of approach and doom are not only members of widely different schools of speculative philosophy, but their well recognized ability and their opinion to great respect, even when expressed individually. How much so, then, when they unite in declaring a single unmistakable conviction! During the past decade our idea of the universe has undergone a complete change—a radical metamorphosis—though but few persons appear to recognize this fact. The notions hitherto entertained by astronomers respecting the stars and the heavens have disappeared. "Take the constellation called the Great Bear or 'The Wagon' as an illustration. Everyone has regarded that as the enduring symbol of pre-established harmony—the unalterable duration of the firmament. For several centuries the mariner has watched the two last stars in that constellation—those that form the rear of the imaginary 'wagon,' and termed 'the pointers'—as pointing infallibly within a few points of the pole star. The polar star and 'the pointers' are the emblems of stability to the mind of every sailor that ploughs the ocean. Yet that ancient constellation is passing away, and its form will be completely changed. Each star in the Great Bear has a motion of its own. Formerly, as the eminent French astronomer, M. Camille Flammarion, recently demonstrated in 'Revue Scientifique,' the constellation had the form of a cross; it is now the form of a wagon, and is gradually changing into an ellipse when it will be of no service to the sailor." Nay, the pole star itself, as well as the stars in the Great Bear, are drifting away from us and from each other at a velocity of thirty miles per second. It takes a cannon ball about five seconds to go one mile. The stars of this constellation are, therefore, drifting sideways from the pole star and each other 150 times as fast as a cannon ball. At this rate how much longer will our present 'pointers' and pole star be reliable for navigators? But it is not necessary to examine distant constellations in order to seek evidences of disruption. It has been customary to treat the planets as members of one family, and astronomers have expatiated enthusiastically on the remarkable fact that the planets all moved in nearly one plane, corresponding with the centre of the sun's body, and that the motion of the sun on its axis those of the planets round their axis (the sun), and the sun and the satellites round their primaries were in one direction—from west to east. Some of the other relations of these bodies were also garrulously presented—as, for instance, that the primary planets show an increase of bulk and diminution of density from the one nearest the sun to the most distant. These facts were adduced to prove the nebular hypothesis and to form a theory of the manner in which nuclei—planets—were formed. "Supposing, from a peculiarity of nebular composition," writes an eminent living scientist, "nuclei are formed, we know, by virtue of the law of gravitation, how the neighbouring matter would aggregate to these nuclei. It is a well known law of physics that fluid matter establishes a rotatory motion when, it collects to a centre—as, for example, whirlpools, whirlwinds, and water sinking through a funnel. We know by mechanics that in this revolving fire mist (nebula) two forces, centrifugal and centripetal, would act in forming the planets, and in severing them from the shrinking mass." It was all as plain as a pikestaff. After the planets were formed, one school of astronomers proceeded to people them; while Prof. Whewell, of Cambridge, and others resolutely restricted life to our globe. But the "more-worlds-than-one" disciples had the best of it for years; and they gave glowing description of the delightful climate of Saturn, and the glorious skies his inhabitants would enjoy in consequence of his long summer and the gorgeous illumination produced by his belt and his eight revolving moons. His solid earth, it was true, was not so dense as our earth—hardly as dense as water in fact; but then might not his inhabitants be a superior race to what we had any conception of—beings not touched with any feeling of the infirmities of mortal men? Then there was Jupiter, the magnificent, whose mass exceeds all the other planets, including Saturn, two and a half times! What a sublime race of beings—probably archangels—must inhabit his prodigious orb! With the bold dash of genius, in short, these scientists declared that man's world was not solitary in the wilderness of the solar system, but that it had companions and brethren whirling in the sunshine and capable of affording all the conditions which life of the highest kind needs for its development. The late Sir David Brewster and the present Astronomer Royal of England were the leading exponents of these views, which were shared by a large majority of scientists and divines. And, indeed, the idea was in accord with common sense and the analogy of nature, as far as mankind have an opportunity of interpreting nature. It was, therefore, a terrible revelation to Professor Airy, when examining Saturn one night with the magnificent equatorial telescope at Greenwich Observatory, he discovered that the planet had suddenly changed shape. Normally presenting the form of an ellipse, he beheld with awe that the two zones of the planet corresponding with the north and south temperate zones of our earth were mysteriously flattened, communicating what he termed a "square-shouldered aspect" to the hitherto beautiful orb. In plain terms, the planet looked like a rectangle with rounded corners. The astronomer was convinced that his eyesight was impaired. He tried another combination of lenses, and a different eyepiece; but the result was the same. There was Saturn and his belt out of all shape. An assistant was summoned. He, too, saw the extraordinary change. What could it indicate? The professor began to consider. There was the mighty mass of Saturn, exceeding that of the earth ninety-fold. That stupendous mass was ended with gravitating energy precisely in the same way as the earth's mass. There must be from the surface towards the centre a continually increasing pressure. This pressure is calculable. It must enormously exceed the internal pressure existing within the earth's interior. Steel, in fact, would be as yielding as water under such a pressure. Such a phenomenal sinking and change of shape as this must have involved amazing and most stupendous throes—throes whose force and magnitude paralyse the imagination and prostrate the mind with the vertigo of the infinite! The cataclysm would certainly involve the utter destruction of life—so far as we understand the term life. The astronomer felt that doom had overtaken the favoured inhabitants of Saturn with their glorious summer and effulgent skies. Henceforth he revealed in his orbit round the sun the silent graveyard of an unknown race. It was from this remarkable planetary catastrophe, combined with certain prophecies of Daniel, Zachariah, and the Apocalypsa, that led Dr. Cumming, some years since to believe that the "Great Tribulation" was close at hand. In this, however, he was mistaken; for it was not then even dreamed that planets, like human beings, vegetables, and nations, have a period of youthful development, maturity, and diabolical or sudden death. Mars, for example, has passed through these stages before the epoch of man on our planet. A gigantic spasm had convulsed him, during which his oceans were gradually drawn into the interior as if contracted, not by large cravens, but by a power resembling, if not identical, to capillary attraction. Two of the family, so to speak, were therefore dead—clothed in everlasting silence—and the former inhabitants had gone to judgment or perished, like the verdure of a bygone summer. "The sun himself is but a star in the Milky Way, and an unhealthy, changeable, organically diseased star at that. The planetary family that revolves round him are likewise subjected to sudden internal maladies—convulsive spasms or morbid and fatal spasms. Mercury is probably burned to a cinder—or, more probably, resembles a red-hot iron ball, uninhabitable except by celestial salamanders. Mars and Saturn are dead. Thus reasoned a few months since the German astronomer, Herr Schroter, of Lilienthal, when an extraordinary experience was vouchsafed to him." He beheld, in fact, the death of the majestic planet of the solar system—the grand and transcendent Jupiter! He reports the awful catastrophe as follows:— "The evening being extremely fine I was watching the second satellite of Jupiter as it gracefully approached the transit of Jupiter's disc. It appeared in contact at half past ten o'clock, and for some minutes remained on the edge of the disc, presenting an appearance not unlike that of the lunar mountains coming into view during the moon's first quarter, until it finally disappeared on the body of the planet. After an interval of exactly twelve minutes I again turned to Jupiter, when, to my utter astonishment, I perceived the same satellite outside the disc. It remained visible for precisely four minutes, and then suddenly vanished. No possible explanation of this most extraordinary phenomenon can be conceived. Of course, even to suppose that a cloud layer rose or fell in a few minutes several thousand miles—about 8,000 miles—is as inadmissible as to suppose the solid crust of a globe to undergo so vast a change of level. The phenomenon will probably for ever remain an impenetrable mystery; but there remains not an atom of doubt that such a gigantic throes involved the instantaneous destruction of everything resembling life on the planet. Death, in fact, overtook Jupiter, as it had overtaken his three brothers, and as it may in a few months overtake our earth or any reader of these words. Saturn and Jupiter seemed to have been suddenly convulsed by a gigantic spasm of gravitation, very much as the individual is suddenly stricken dead with apoplexy. There are good grounds for believing that our globe as well as the kindred planets, Venus, Uranus and Neptune, may simultaneously perish in what will be the crowning convulsion of our system. Father Secchi, the eminent astronomer of Rome, the highest living authority on the sun, has recently discovered that the grand source of all terrestrial activity, vigour and vital power—the sun himself—is at present subject to some extraordinary influences, which produce continual changes in his form as well as his size. His diameter is less than usual, his colored sierras are deeper, while his red prominences are larger than usual. These perturbations, the learned father declares, indicate a disturbance of extraordinary character and vehemence in the solar-cloud envelope, probably occasioned by shrinkage in the sun's mass. For it must not be forgotten, while examining the probabilities of the impending convulsion and extinction of life from our earth and the solar system, that this fact of the sun's shrinkage has been tolerably well known to astronomers for nearly a decade. Of course the sun cannot continue to give off the vast amount of heat that he does without expending materials. You cannot heat every room in the new post office without a large daily expenditure of fuel. The sun emits every minute as much heat as would melt a shell of ice 40 feet thick all over the sun's surface. There has been and still is a great deal of conjecture about the origin of this heat. Some have attributed it to chemical combinations; but if the sun were of solid coal it would have been completely burned out during the period of scriptural chronology—say 5,000 years. The view that some astronomers entertain is that the heat is maintained partly by an index of meteors—wrecks of exploded planets—and partly by a contraction of his volume. This contraction is variously estimated at from 300 to 1,000 feet in diameter per annum; but while the contraction is well established, the amount of it is almost total conjecture. Father Secchi, in this alarming solar disturbance, traces a striking comparison between the fate of the planet Saturn and that likely before long to befall the sun. In Saturn and his system we see a miniature of the solar system. In each system there are eight orbs circling around the central body; and each system exhibits close by the central orb a multitude of discrete bodies—the zodiacal light in the solar system and the scheme of rings in the Saturnian system—subserving and unexplained purpose. There is still another momentous consideration. The various planets probably act upon the sun even as the sun acts upon them. Let us look for an analogical system of action and reaction. Unquestionably the moon exerts an influence on the occurrence of earthquakes and volcanoes in our planet, not, be it understood, by her own attraction directly, but by affecting the balance between terrestrial forces. We observe the direct action of the moon in the tides; but in the indirect action of which we speak, the primary forces—centrifugal and centripetal—are affected. Similarly, as the eminent French savant, M. Flammarion, has remarked, "the planets indirectly affect the sun's condition, and the recent gigantic throes in the two prime planets, Saturn and Jupiter, probably exerted a powerful and disastrous influence on the central orb of our system." As exhibiting the terrible experience, through which our globe has already passed, the distinguished philosopher just quoted remarks: "There are grounds for believing that the moon will unite itself with our earth. The results of the collision are manifest. The whole mass of the moon and the cold crust of the earth would be raised some thousands of degrees, and the surface of our globe be converted into a fiery ocean. Such a collision is by no means improbable, however, for it is almost certain that such processes of combination between different parts of our globe may have repeatedly happened before the earth attained its present magnitude, and the luxuriant vegetation which now exists, as deposits of coal, may have at different times been buried under the fiery debris resulting from the conflict of those masses." Something in the same style on a smaller scale is continually happening in our day. Thousands of meteors are daily falling upon our globe mostly in the form of ashes—consequent upon the fierce conflagration of those bodies while being projected with inconceivable rapidity through our atmosphere, and it strikes the ground like the Iowa meteor of February 14, 1875—a series of metallic fragments, weighing in all over 5,000 pounds. Let the imagination that is not appalled by these immensities strive to conceive of them. Yet science is as certain concerning these distances as in predicting that there will be a total eclipse of the sun on the 17th of September next, visible on the North and Western Pacific Ocean and Australia. When astronomers, therefore, enter the field of prophecy, their presagings deserve attention. But when theologians, skilled in scriptural exegesis and believers in spiritualism who are incapable of charity, unite with the mathematical astronomer in predicting that the end of the world is at hand—that the very door, so to speak, of this life is closed, and that the people of sagacity and acumen will perceive that this is no crude Millerite sensation—no fanatical dream.—New York Sunday Mercury.