

the Atlantic in a yacht. The project, if successful, could have served no useful purpose, except to prove that sometimes foolhardiness goes unpunished. But the "Uncle Sam" had not even good luck. Mrs. Goldsmith, not being much of a sailor, was dreadfully sea-sick all the time, and the weather treated them just as it once treated Jonah. But for the good ship "Queen of Nations," which picked them up off the coast of Newfoundland, we should have heard of the daring *voyageurs* no more. But let us hope that their experience will be a warning to them and to others not to try and make courage contemptible.

MR. BLENNERHASSETT is making a vigorous and altogether praiseworthy effort to redress a wrong under which the Nonconformist ministers of England have long suffered. As the law now stands any young Episcopal cleric, although he has had no experience, and can be relied upon for nothing but a pretty lisp, a hand at croquet, and a collar that looks like a wide white hoop may marry a couple without the presence of any civil officer—but a Nonconformist, although he may be great in character, in reputation and in public service cannot perform a marriage ceremony without the presence of a Registrar to make it legal. Roman Catholic priests are included in the ban, of course, for they too are Dissenters. But Mr. Blennerhassett proposes: That it shall be lawful for Nonconformist ministers and Roman Catholic priests, under proper restrictions, to solemnize marriages in buildings registered for marriages without the presence of the Registrar.

THIS levelling up is better than the old inequality, but it always seemed to me as if a levelling down would be better. Marriage is a civil contract much more than a religious one, and a civil officer should be present to see that the legal and binding process is gone through. A certain form of words must be prescribed by the State, and to trust to persons who must be more or less irresponsible will be an unnecessary risk. It is not easy to say what constitutes a "minister" in some English churches, but the Registrar all can be sure of. It seems to me that it would be better to have the civil contract said and sealed before the Registrar first, and then the religious ceremony, for all who desire it.

ENGLAND is about to add another link to her great chain of fortresses, from England to India. The acceptance of the Island of Cyprus from the Sultan of Turkey has been followed by the acquisition of Tangier upon the, presumably, easy terms of defending the Sultan of Morocco against a pretender. Egypt has fallen an easy prey to England and France, as associated creditors—which will tell most to the interest of England, as France is simply a creditor, while England is interested in opening up a new and strong way to India. Commanding Tangier and Gibraltar, the British troops can shut up the mouth of the Mediterranean at will.

THIS purchase policy seems an easy and peaceful method for acquiring strongholds, but it is not difficult to see that it may lead to trouble. What if Germany should adopt the same policy, and begin to buy the seaports she needs so badly? Suppose Bismarck should persuade Belgium that there can be no safety from French greed, except in handing over Antwerp to Germany, accepting Germany's protection in return. Would England suffer the transaction quietly? Not likely.

TROUBLES have again arisen in Afghanistan through the rebellion of the native troops at Cabul, and, of course, the British army in India is totally unprepared to meet them. Prompt advance upon the rebels is impossible; for 25 per cent. of the native troops on the frontier have gone on furlough; scarcely any of the Trans-Indus infantry regiments can muster 500 men each; the transport department has been broken up, and can only be organized again with great difficulty, and altogether the outlook is not cheering. It will end well for Great Britain—for the great Earl who presides over the destinies of the Empire is still on the side of those angels which are supposed to co-operate with the British Providence—and a "scientific frontier" is never complete. But many are beginning to ask whether the game we are playing in India is really worth the candle? We have incurred a vast responsi-

bility, which involves an ever increasing anxiety on the part of those who have a sense of duty, and the return for it all is, at least, a very doubtful good. Whether Great Britain's consideration for India is in any way commensurate with its duty toward it, is a question that opens up large fields for debate.

IT never takes long to rush an English crowd from one extreme to the other. A few weeks ago they were howling a poor Carey as if he had basely bartered the honour of his country for his own head; and now that is found that he simply did his duty, no more and no less, they are shouting his praises as if he had played the hero and rendered valuable service to the nation. This last display is no less stupid than the first.

AND Captain Carey's letter to the *Christian* is such a bit of maudlin sentimentality as I never expected to see from the pen of an educated man and a soldier.

THE Bishop of Rochester has laid down the following as his "platform" on the temperance question, which seems to be marked with common sense:—

"Our individual work," he says, "is plain. We will avoid dogmatism and Pharisaism. While each of us tries to take that share in the work which conscience and opportunity indicate to him, there can be no need to censure those, who seem to be doing less, or to envy those who attempt to do more. We will refuse to encroach on our brother's liberty, while we wish to help him to use it. We will also be careful not to put a stumbling-block in his way through an over-anxious desire to defend and enjoy our own. Not least, will we be careful to remember that sympathy is often more effectual than argument, patience more persuasive than rebuke; that example wins, where eloquent tracts are torn to pieces, and that though zeal may tire, charity can never fail."

I ENTIRELY agree with the following remarks by the Editor of *Truth*:—

I should like to know whether Professors Huxley and Allman themselves derive much satisfaction and real enjoyment from the conclusion they, like a good many others of these explorers of "the unknowable," as Herbert Spencer hath it, have come to, viz., that "the basis of life is protoplasm," and that this all-leavening yeast lies at the bottom of the ocean in one vast, inexhaustible layer, described in the proper terms therefore as "Bathybius" (*i.e.* out of the depths), or in simpler language, agreeable to the vulgar, "a peculiar slimy matter." Now just think of this, ye who fancied yourselves sprung from the gods! "Dust thou art and unto dust shalt thou return," is nothing to it. It is one thing to be reminded at once of one's mortality and immortality by Shakespeare's

"To what base uses we may return, Horatio!" and
Imperious Caesar, dead and turned to clay,
Might stop a hole to keep the wind away.
O, that that earth, which kept the world in awe,
Should patch a wall to expel the winter's flaw!

But it is quite another thing, and a far more miserable one, to be prated at perpetually with these dissections and analyses of human matter by men so wise in their own generation.

And when they have made this discovery, as they would have it, which is really none at all, for we knew it was so, I would simply ask: "Après ça?" What signifies your "Bathybius," Professor Allman, when you are as ignorant as a born idiot of the real secret of life? What is "protoplasm," and what "Bathybius"? How is it the vehicle of thought and genius? Answer me that if you can, though I am bound to say it is a matter of uncommonly small concern to me as a thinking man, who would be more disposed to sit down comfortably under the motto of one of your own school:—"Dum Vivimus, Vivamus."

But after all this fuss about "Bathybius"—this new "elixir vitae" of the modern Van Helmonts—is there such a thing? Is it not all fudge that this potent mud dredged up from the deep sea by the science officers of H.M.S. "Porcupine" was anything else but mud. The best of the joke is that the rival scientists of H.M.S. "Challenger," who were pretty good dredgers, could never find any of it, and they dismiss the matter with a very hard and cruel observation, that this wonderful slime was really only an inorganic precipitate due to the action of the alcohol in which the specimens were preserved. *Sic transit gloria Bathybii!*

The Presidents of the British Association for the Advancement of Science will have to find a new text for their next lay sermon. I would suggest whether the sediment at the bottom of the sea may not be the refuse meteoric dust of ages, the chips of old and worn-out worlds.

EDITOR.