

The Outlook.

Mr. Bradlaugh's Reply to the "Journal of Commerce."

OUR American journalists are often amused at the blunders made by foreign editors when commenting on American affairs. Every now and then they enjoy presenting some ludicrous illustrations of the curious and incorrect statements found in the English, French, and other newspapers. Whether our trans-Atlantic cousins pay them off in the same coin or not, we are unable to say. It is quite certain they may do so if they wish. There is no want of occasion for it. Nothing, however, that has ever appeared in the American newspaper press could be more ridiculous than many of the statements made in regard to the Hon. Charles Bradlaugh. Not long since the Junior editor of the *HEALTH MONTHLY* took it upon himself to correct some very singular misrepresentations printed in the columns of the Boston *Commonwealth*, which is certainly a very respectable newspaper. It was fair enough to print his communication. The *Journal of Commerce* of this city made a violent and unjust attack upon Mr. Bradlaugh. Mr. Bradlaugh replied and the editor was ungracious enough to refuse to print it. A friend thereupon took it to the *Commercial Advertiser*, in the columns of which it appeared. We are pleased to reproduce the letter as it shows very clearly how outrageously Mr. Bradlaugh had been misrepresented by the *Journal of Commerce*:

20 CURCUS ROAD, ST. JOHN'S WOOD, 1
LONDON, N. W., Sept. 12, 1881.

To the Publisher *Journal of Commerce*, New York City, U. S. A.—
Sir: Your issue for August 17th has just reached me, and its leading article is so astounding in its utter inaccuracy that I ask, as some slight means of setting myself right with your readers, that you will at once insert this letter and send me a copy of your journal in which it is published. I have never been indicted and tried for writing and printing obscene books. I have been indicted for publishing a book on the population question written about forty-five years ago by Dr. Charles Knowlton, of Massachusetts. The trial occupied several days. This book was not considered an obscene book by Lord Chief Justice Cockburn, who tried the case, nor have I ever been attacked at law for any other book. Mr. Truelove is not a printer, and has never printed any book whatever for me. Mr. Truelove was not imprisoned for printing any book of which I was the author. He was indicted and imprisoned for publishing a book on the population question, written by the Hon. Robert Dale Owen, United States Minister to the Court of Naples, but with which book I had no connection direct or indirect.

Your allegation as to the Hall of Science, No. 142 Old street, is quite untrue. I never purchased it. I helped to build it. My connection with it was never varied, and so far as I am concerned, my connection with the hall has always been attended with very considerable profit to it. The original lessee of it still carries it on. There are on the average three lectures per week in it all the lecture season, and for three years past most successful science classes have been conducted in it under Government inspection and authorization. Last winter it was occupied five nights per week with such classes.

I wait from you some expression of regret for your exceedingly libellous article, and should you not think this any part of your duty, I shall be most reluctantly obliged to submit the question by legal proceedings against you to the decision of a jury of American citizens from whom I am sure I shall have justice.

Signed, yours truly,

BRADLAUGH.

Comstockian Partiality.

THERE is a clause in the Comstock Postal law which makes it a misdemeanor to send by mail anything relating to lotteries or prize packages. Pretty much all the manufacturers of chewing and smoking tobacco have been in the habit of putting into their packages a prize of some description for the purpose of attracting purchasers. It is said that some manufacturers have announced that they distributed \$300,000 in this way. Recently Chief Drummond of the Secret Service in this city has been sent out under the direction of the United States District Attorney to notify all these manu-

facturers that this practice of putting prizes into their packages of smoking and chewing tobacco is likely to lead them into difficulty under the law; every person so offending being liable to a fine of \$500 or to imprisonment for six months. Now, a physician who prescribes "prudential checks to the family," or who issues a physiological work which is considered somewhat broad in its language, has, in no instance been treated in this kindly way. In one instance a physician in large practice consulted two different attorneys when the law was passed, and he was confidently assured by both of them that physicians would not be proceeded against; that the law could not be intended to tie the hands of physicians in such cases. Nevertheless this physician was decoyed by Comstock and heavily fined. A physician in Buffalo, issuing a monograph on spermatorrhoea, submitted his pamphlet to the District Attorney and was referred by this officer to Comstock. The pamphlet was submitted to the latter, at least so we were informed, but the agent of the Vice Society vouchsafed no opinion in the matter. Some months after the Buffalo physician was decoyed for mailing his pamphlet and sentenced to pay a fine of \$100. A Chicago physician issuing a pamphlet on various diseases, submitted his work to the Post Office officials, and they declared it mailable. Comstock came along, or at least his Western agent did, and obtaining one of these medical pamphlets by mail, had the doctor arrested, and he was actually sentenced to the state prison for three years! There was nothing obscene in the pamphlet but it contained something which technically violated this Comstock law. In another instance a physician far advanced in life and in delicate health was proceeded against and sentenced to one year's imprisonment for simply prescribing a preventive of conception! Friends came to his rescue, testified to his good character, and succeeded in getting the sentence commuted to \$100 fine.

Now, what we would like to ask, is this: Why should the tobacco manufacturers be treated with so much more consideration than the physicians? There are lots of people who consider doctors necessary evils; there is not a small party which considers medicines of all kinds injurious, and there are unquestionably some who would be pleased to have medicine as well as tobacco swept off the face of the earth. But there is probably a larger party that opposes the use of tobacco than that which opposes medicine. It is quite safe to say that there are more people who believe that tobacco is injurious than there are who believe that prevention of conception is immoral. Nevertheless, those who actually offer a prize to all who will use the weed are treated thus "gingerly," while physicians who are absolutely decoyed into a technical violation of the law, are thus harshly dealt with. Let us not be misunderstood, however, we are glad this warning has been extended to the tobacco manufacturers instead of decoying them and subjecting themselves and their families to disgrace and suffering by fines and imprisonment. The course pursued in this instance is simply humane and commendable. We only ask why the same course has not been pursued in the treatment of respectable members of our profession.

(FROM THE TRUTH SEEKER.) Post-Office Tyranny.

THE final decision in the case of DR. FOOTE'S *HEALTH MONTHLY* has been reached by the post-office authorities, and Dr. Foote has been deprived of the use of the mail to send his paper except by paying one cent on each copy. The decision was given by one Freeman, who is employed somewhere around the office at Washington, and shows very plainly that it is written by a little man who wants to appear big. He swells up with his judicial importance to a very large size and lays down his propositions, which he says are settled beyond dispute. They may be so far as he is concerned, but we fancy the people will go on disputing the right of any petty post-office clerk to deprive them of a newspaper which they want, for a cent a copy means ruin to any publisher unless he can evade it, as Dr. Foote has done by mailing his paper from Canada, where the post-office officials do not arrogate to themselves the functions of judge and executioner. One objection to Dr. Foote's paper—noted by the oracular individual who sits in judgment on radical journals in the post-office—was that he sent out a large number of sample copies; but no notice is taken of the fact that right in Washington a firm solicits advertisements on the ground that its sends out one hundred thousand sample copies per month. In view of this, and the well-known cupidity of government officials, the question might be asked as to how much is paid for the privilege. We would also like to know why the post-office lets Harper and his Franklin Square Library through at pound rates, when the publications are books, to send which we have to put on stamps? Is it because the Republican officials want the support of *Harper's Weekly*? And what right have they to use the people's mail service to pay for services rendered to them personally? There is a good deal of favoritism and tyranny exercised by all our government officials, and none are more brazen and outrageous than the little almighties who distribute our mail.