

account of him above the door. The tower, which once belonged to the now extinct family of the Galli, is the property of the Galletti family who have restored it as near as possible to its original form. There is a small museum in which there are a number of relics of the philosopher, his autographs, etc.

It was when he resided in this country villa he received many friends, amongst them being John Milton. About 1617, Galileo again visited Rome, and was well received by Pope Urban VIII., but when in 1630 his "Dialogues on the Ptolemaic and Copernican Systems" appeared, the Pope, who thought he was represented by an absurd simpleton who defended the Ptolemaic system, summoned Galileo once more to Rome, though now an old man of seventy and in poor health. It was on this occasion, according to some writers, he was put to the torture and forced to recant, uttering the well-known words: *E pur si muove*—it does move—referring to the earth. But there seems to be some doubt about this.

However, he was, ordered into close confinement in the palace of the Archbishop of Siena, where he was treated with contumely, and forbidden even to speak on scientific subjects. He had two natural daughters, whom he placed in a convent, near to his country house. The eldest of these corresponded with her father while in Siena, upwards of a hundred of her letters being preserved in the National Library in Florence. The serious illness of this favourite daughter induced Galileo to petition for mitigation of his sentence, and he was at last allowed to leave Siena for Arcetri, where his daughter expired in his arms. From that time Galileo was allowed to reside in a house much nearer the city, which bears the usual marble plate. He was now quite blind from rheumatic gout in the eyes.

His favourite pupils Viviani and Torricelli continued with him to the last, and he expired in the arms of Viviani in 1642. His body was borne to its resting place in the Church of Santa Croce—the Westminster Abbey of Florence, where many magnificent monuments are to be seen. Finally let me take you to the

#### MUSEUM OF NATURAL HISTORY

in the Via Romana where I passed some hours a few days ago. Here in a Tribune, a temple dedicated to Galileo, stands a full length statue of the philosopher surrounded by busts of his principal disciples. Some of his most valuable instruments are exhibited in cases round the room. To me the most interesting were the two first telescopes constructed in 1609, which do not look much thicker than a walking stick and about the same length. Here is also the microscope invented by Galileo, and the loadstone magnet used in his experiments, and beside it one of his fingers removed from his hand by the antiquarian, Govi, before the body was taken to its last resting place. There is also a globe here which is particularly interesting, though it has no connection with Galileo. It has upon it the Lakes Albert and Victoria Nyanza, in Africa, which were afterwards forgotten, until brought to light again by Captain Speke in 1858, and Sir Samuel Baker in 1864. It was made by the Cosmographer Antonio Santucci between the years 1588 and 1593. The chair in which Galileo was accustomed to sit is also preserved here.

*Florence, November, 1885.*

T. H.

#### NEWS FROM REV. DONALD MACGILLIVRAY.

The Rev. J. McGillivray, Cote St. Antoine, writes: Enclosed find extracts from my brother Donald's latest letter from Cheefoo. He reached there on Dec. 1, safe and sound, and will likely at once start inward to Pong Kia Cwang where Mr. Goforth is with the missions of the American Board.

Much of this information he got through an intelligent editor of a North China paper, and, therefore, will be reliable. To these extracts you might add his last words to me. "The need of more men is imperative. More men now. Oh, ring out this cry into the ears of the Canadian Church. More men now for Jesus' sake."

As to the floods of China, they are not, as is generally supposed, confined to the Province of Honan, nor due to the Yellow River overflow. The Province of Shantung has suffered terribly. The cause of the suddenness of the floods is the wide-spread deforestation for fuel. The people must have wood, as, except in a few places, the enormous coal fields of China lie undeveloped, owing to the superstitious dread of the anger of the "Earth Dragon." This deforestation is the chief cause of the Yellow River troubles. The original breach in this river required 6,000 feet of embankment. The closing of such a breach against a current ten miles an hour and 100 feet deep would be no easy task for skilled Western engineers. But for Chinamen to close such a breach before the autumnal freshets set in was a task utopian in the extreme. There was much delay at the beginning of operations, and much suspected peculations of immense sums that greatly hindered the Imperial Government. Several commissioners of high rank were degraded on these and other grounds. During the course of the summer (1887) the commissioners petitioned the Emperor for an electric light, five *li* (one and one-quarter miles) of railway, with 100 trucks for carting earth, and two steam launches. The request was granted, and the necessary plant sent up from Shanghai. These improvements enabled the workmen, on two shifts of twelve hours each, to labour night and day. Then the transportation of material became comparatively rapid. But the difficulties were great.

Timber was scarce; the earth of the country is of a sandy nature, with little or no cohesive power, and the eddies at this breach did much damage. The steam launches were at last found unserviceable. At length the accidental sinking of a

junk laden with millet-stalks brought the work to a stop. When the autumn freshets did come, a wide gap was still unfilled. Ever since, therefore, the original break in 1887, there has been a steady outpour of water into South Honan and Anhui. In consequence the flooded districts have remained flooded, the outlets yet found being entirely insufficient to drain off the water. Part of the flood has gone out by the old north-east channel, part by the small rivers, and part, it is feared, is flowing out by the Yang-Tsi-Kiang; and if so, will probably silt up that noble stream at its mouth and upward, and so render it as unnavigable as the Yellow River itself.

The flow carries immense quantities of unfertile sand and detritus from the barren mountains of Mongolia. Hence it is said that there is great danger, if not certainty, that most of Honan, when the breach is finally conquered and the flood drained off, will be rendered permanently sterile. I understand that the whole of the work was not lost by the autumn freshets, and that now thousands are at it again with might and main, under a new commissioner (the old commissioner having been degraded for his failures), endeavouring, if possible, to close the gap before the spring freshet.

It seems, however, doubtful if the closing of the breach will do much good. The draining of the country will still largely remain to be done by canals; and, besides, the river bank is said to be in a very rotten condition in many other places, and so a repetition of disastrous floods may occur at any time. As far as I can learn, the best foreign engineers advise a complete survey of the whole river as the first step toward the solution of the great problem. This would require some years, during which the floods would be allowed to remain as they are.

Their opinion is that the flood has done all the damage it can do, and that several years spent in solving the problem for all time would abundantly compensate for the temporary loss of much of Honan. Some are of opinion that the people should be assisted to emigrate, say to Mongolia, where there is ample room.

Much money has been raised for the "repairs" by the sale of official titles, the Peking *Gazette* reporting vast sums so raised in different provinces. Many of the distressed ones, of course, are employed on the works, but untold misery is now prevailing. The northern provinces, e.g., Shantung, are literally swarming with poor refugees from the flooded districts. Their whole occupation is begging, as they are on the verge of starvation.

In reference to the practice of infanticide in China, the following paragraph from the Peking *Gazette*, the official organ of the Emperor, is interesting in the extreme: "The Governor of Hunan mentions the fact that infanticide, which he stigmatizes as a most abominable practice, has been long rife in Hunan (not Honan), and reports the measures which have taken in recent years to counteract the habit. Among these the most important is the institution of foundling hospitals, to which the gentry and people have subscribed in a most liberal measure. The latest offering of this kind has been from a literary graduate, who, in compliance with the dying request of his parents, made over a favour of land valued at 3,690 taels, for the benefit of charity."

There is no need to exaggerate the moral condition of the Chinese; and this paragraph proves two things: first, that infanticide has been common, and second, that charity of a certain kind at least exists in Hunan.

#### THE SO-CALLED HERESY CASE.—AN EARNEST PROTEST.

MR. EDITOR,—I notice a short editorial in your issue of January 2, in which you quote from the *Globe* some statements of the Rev. Mr. Jackson, seriously reflecting on the Christian characters of the brethren and sisters recently suspended from communion in Knox Church, Galt. You further remark that such "acts in themselves deserve suspension, altogether apart from the question of teaching heretical doctrines." Without stopping at present to notice this position, to which I, for one, do not subscribe, I would remark that, when this editorial was written, you could scarcely have observed in the *Globe* of Dec. 29 (four days before the issue of your paper), an explicit contradiction by Mr. J. K. Cranston, of the allegations which you quote. Had you read that letter you would surely have cancelled the editorial, or else, in ordinary fairness, have quoted the contradiction as well as the charges. And I do not see how any candid reader could fail to be impressed by the truthfulness of Mr. Cranston's calm, Christian letter, borne out as it is by the Christian gentleness of all that has appeared from these brethren and sisters in their present trying position.

I notice, further, a second editorial, containing, what seems to me, a very gratuitous reflection on "our Methodist friends," as well as on the letter of the Rev. James Harris. Here, again, you do not seem to have seen in the *Globe* of Dec. 31 (two days before your issue), the letter of the Rev. A. Truax, containing a contradiction as emphatic of the assertions which you have quoted from Mr. Jackson regarding him, and closing with a seasonable hint as to the importance of making sure of facts before printing or circulating statements "injurious to the good name" of our fellow-Christians, whether of our own or of any other denomination! I must add that I do not see any attempt whatever, in the letter of the Rev. Mr. Harris, to "make capital" out of the present unfortunate prosecution. His letter, on the contrary, seems to me very seasonable and very much to the point, in view of the present most salutary and Christian movement toward greater co-operation between Presbyterians and Methodists in Canada, so as to ensure a more sensible and beneficial distribu-

tion of Gospel privileges. For, if the principles which have guided the Galt Presbytery were to prevail generally in the Presbyterian Church in Canada, such Christian co-operation between brethren would be practically impossible. As it is, many Presbyterian ministers follow the brotherly practice of inviting any Christian members of other Churches who may be present at a communion season to sit down with them at the Lord's table. We are thus confronted with the spectacle of strangers sitting down at a Presbyterian communion table, holding the very same opinions for which attached and faithful members are publicly excommunicated! And if this Christian practice were ruled out, then, as Methodist ministers frequently occupy Presbyterian pulpits, we might see re-enacted the old story which we all have heard quoted as an instance of Baptist narrowness, now happily obsolete, when a Pædo-Baptist minister who had preached the "action" sermon was excluded from the Table, and obliged to retire without partaking of the feast. In fact there is no end to the un-Christian inconsistencies in which such principles would involve us.

It is scarcely possible to overstate in words the grief and indignation with which many earnest and loving Christian hearts,—of Presbyterians as well as others,—have been filled by the printed reports of the proceedings in this most miserable prosecution, reports which, as they are to be supposed unbiassed, could scarcely do injustice to the prosecution. Many, indeed, have been astonished and bewildered, hardly knowing what to think of an action so unprecedented in their experience, and which, a few months ago, some of us would have deemed impossible in an age which is supposed to have learned something of the lesson taught by the bitter experience of the past,—of the necessity for a broader Christian toleration in regard to difference of opinion. Hitherto the feeling excited has, with many, been almost too strong for ordinary language, but, lest the silence of sorrow and shame should be mistaken for that of indifference or acquiescence, I think it is time that some of it should find expression in behalf of the thousands of Presbyterian Christians who feel that, before the Christian as well as the non-Christian public of this Dominion, their Church has been put, by official action, in what they consider a false position, against which they can scarcely enter too emphatic a protest.

The "fons et origo mali" seems to be a fundamentally wrong conception of what constitutes fitness for partaking of the Lord's supper, and of the relation of Church organizations to that ordinance. It is, as Robert Hall asserted long ago, "the table of the Lord," and not the table of any particular branch of His Church. It is the table set for true believers, true followers of Christ, "whatever their name or sign;" and no Church body, acting in the name of the great Head of the Church, has any right to exclude from it—whether temporarily or permanently—any one of His true followers who can approach it in sincerity and faith. It is the table of the "Church of the firstborn, whose names are written in heaven," and no branch of the visible Church has any right to exclude from it any true member of the invisible Church, simply because he or she cannot pronounce its particular shibboleth! Faith, love and obedience were the sole requisites known to the Apostles, and no Church which professedly founds its teaching on theirs has a right to demand tests of its own appointment or bar the way to the Master's table with barricades of its own Standards. When any Church,—professing, as we all do, to "believe in the Communion of the Saints," cuts off from its communion any of Christ's faithful people, it takes upon itself the sin of schism, and must be held responsible accordingly. And of all "heresies," this heresy of dividing those whom Christ has joined together in the tender bond of a common love, is, I think, the most deplorable.

It is, moreover, in contravention of the time-honoured principles and practice of the Presbyterian Church itself that such rigid conditions of conformity in opinion are demanded in her name. We are told in an official document, published by the Presbyterian Alliance, that she "never failed to distinguish between defiant contradictors and those able to yield only a general or partial assent, but willing to abide in her communion, wait on her teaching and seek from God further light and guidance." This is precisely the position of our suspended brethren as distinctly defined in their own published letters.

Furthermore, the Directory of Church Government and Excommunication, drawn up by the Westminster Assembly, contains the following very distinct deliverance:

"Such errors as subvert the faith, or any other errors which overthrow the power of godliness, if the party who holds them spread them—these being publicly known to the just scandal of the Church the power of excommunication shall proceed. But the persons who hold other errors in judgment about points wherein learned and godly men possibly may and do differ, we do not discern to be such against whom the sentence of excommunication for these causes should be denounced." There can be no question that the "error" of our Galt brethren—if they be in error—belongs neither to "such errors as subvert the faith," nor to those which "overthrow the power of godliness," since it leads them to strive after the highest "power of godliness," as attainable by the Christian in this life. And, as George Herbert well says:

Sink not in spirit; who aimeth at the sky  
Shoots higher much than he that means a tree.

And, on the other hand, the point in question is one "wherein learned and godly men may and do differ," and therefore, according to the authority quoted, a difference of opinion in regard to it is not a sufficient cause of excommunication. I maintain, therefore, that the action directed against these, our true Christian brethren, is opposed to the oldest ecclesiastical Directory of our Church, as well as contrary to the spirit of its great Head, who demands of His people that whatever be their differences of opinion, they should be one in Him.

I shall reserve some further remarks for another letter.

A LAY PRESBYTERIAN.