

CHARLES BRADLAUGH.

Charles Bradlaugh, who just now occupies so conspicuous a place in the attention of Englishmen, was born forty seven years ago, the son of a solicitor's clerk, at Hoxton. In his early years, he was an errand-boy, a clerk to a coal merchant, a teetotaler and a Sunday-school teacher. But at the early age of sixteen he discovered in himself certain atheistical and revolutionary opinions, together with a certain sense of power which led to his becoming the man he is to-day. He enlisted as a soldier and nearly revolutionized the Seventh Dragoon Guards; but he purchased his discharge and became clerk to a solicitor, writer and lecturer under the name of "Iconoclast." The creed he has developed during his career is that of Atheism, "Malthusianism" and Republicanism. He has, in the advocacy of this creed, said and published much that is shocking and unavoury to the least squeamish, and he is at this moment the leader of all the strongest and most irreconcilable forces in Great Britain.

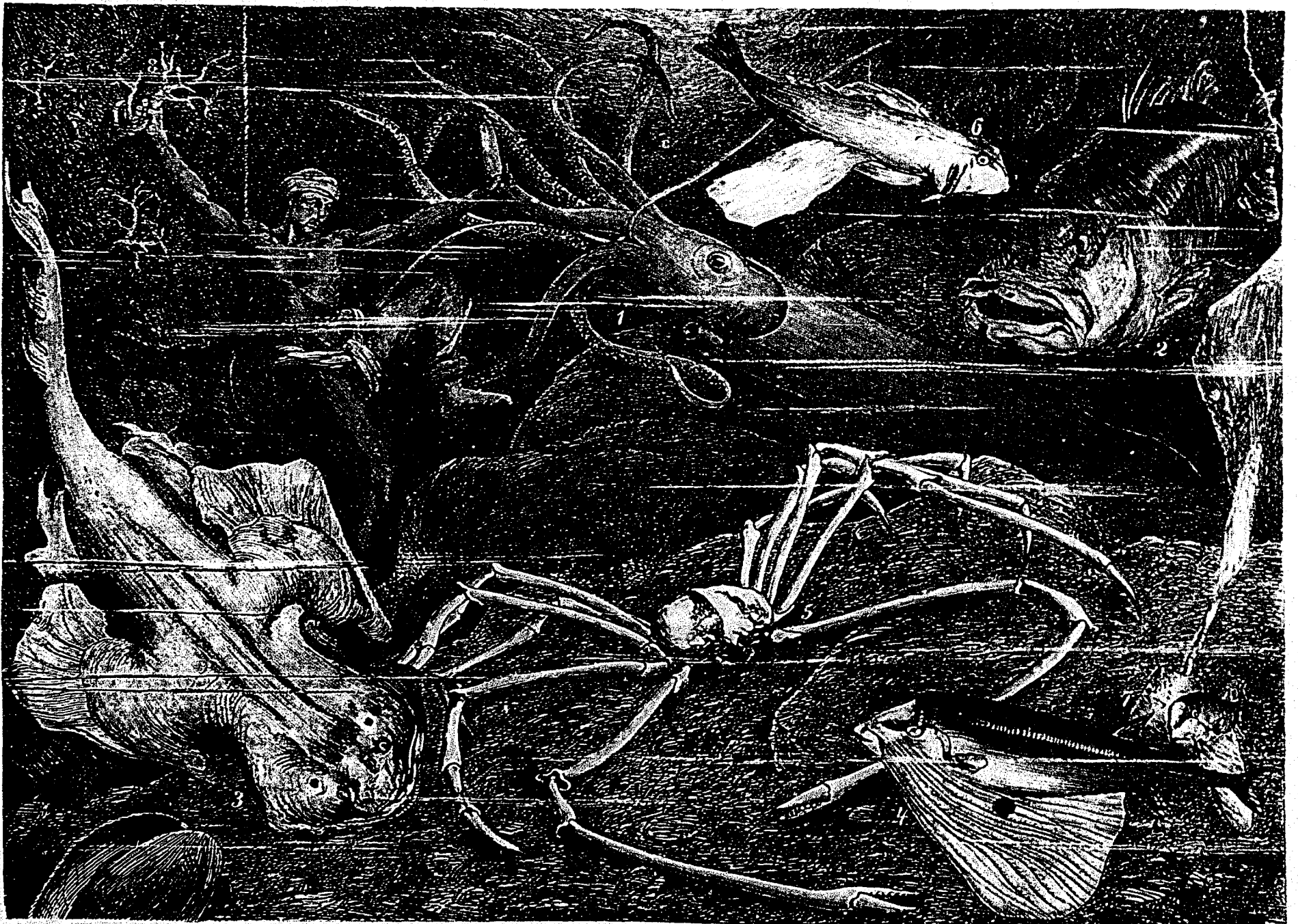
Mr. Bradlaugh is a man of great physical strength, of very considerable ability, and of inordinate boldness. He is not by any means a statesman, but he has made himself into a very good lawyer, and he is a powerful speaker and a fearless advocate of the most nauseous opinions. His influence, which is great with the lower classes of the populace, arises partly from his audacity and partly from an unlimited belief in himself, which he has communicated to many others. At the last election he was chosen to represent Northampton in the House of Commons. Upon the meeting of Parliament he declined to take the oath, proposing to affirm. This proposition encountered strong opposition; and on a motion that he be not received, the motion was referred to a committee. Upon the case coming up for action in the House, it was moved that Bradlaugh be permitted to affirm. Sir Harding Gifford moved an amendment forbidding him either to take oath or make affirmation. This was adopted by a vote of 275 to 230. On the announcement of the vote, which had the effect of unseating Mr. Bradlaugh, there was an extraordinary scene of excitement, the Opposition cheering tremendously and waving their hats. Sixty-five Liberals, including Home Rulers, voted against Bradlaugh's right to affirm. One Conservative and ten Home Rulers voted with the minority. On June 23d Mr. Bradlaugh was called on to hear the decision of the House, and, taking his place at the bar, eloquently combated the resolution arrived at against him. He said it was unprecedented to condemn



any one unheard. He argued against being accused of atheism. He said he would not forego either his opinions or his claims to his seat. The House might afterwards expel him, but until he had taken his seat it had no jurisdiction over him. The House could not override the law which permitted him to take the oath. If an appeal should be necessary, as he hoped it would not be, it must be made. He asked the House to give him the justice which the judges would give him if appealed to. He was loudly cheered.

At the conclusion of Mr. Bradlaugh's speech the Speaker demanded that he should withdraw; but he replied: "I insist, respectfully, on my right, as a duly-elected member for Northampton, to take the oath, and I respectfully refuse to withdraw." To a second request he made a like response. Sir Stafford Northcote moved that the Speaker be authorized to enforce his withdrawal, and the motion was adopted by a vote of 326 to 33. Mr. Bradlaugh refused positively to obey. He was thereupon removed beyond the bar. He returned twice, declaring that the House had no right to exclude him; that it could only imprison him. Finally the Speaker had him removed by the Sergeant-at-arms and locked up in the prison, under the Clock Tower, being followed by three policemen and a procession of members of the House. On the 24th, in the House of Commons, Sir Stafford Northcote moved that the House having asserted its authority, orders Mr. Bradlaugh's release. This was adopted. Since then the Bradlaugh case has well wrecked the Government, and it is only on the threat of resignation, that Mr. Gladstone succeeded in rallying supporters enough to permit Bradlaugh to take his seat on a simple affirmation.

There are many bad habits which, though they cannot be called by so severe a name as vices, are nevertheless, grave faults, regrettable on all accounts, and working a great deal of mischief when indulged in. One of them is the habit of teasing. Always a tendency to be checked in oneself, as dangerous to the comfort of others and sure to weaken friendship and create enmities, teasing is an infliction we must bear with patience, if we would not be ridiculous, and in being ridiculous lay ourselves open to renewed attacks. The only thing to do is to bear the rub heroically, and never show that it chafed—unless, indeed, nature has gifted us with ready wits and a power of quick return, when we can give as much as we are obliged to receive, and silence our would-be persecutor by becoming in our turn the assailant.



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