

## ALL ABOUT SIGNS.

An advertiser in a city daily paper says he wants a second-hand sign-board, of which he gives the dimensions. There are sundry friends of the Recorder's ready to supply the want, provided the name is given. These dark, long nights, are favorable, and sign-boards are "thick as leaves in Val-Ambrosa;" but all have names and trades on them,—consequently the commission is vague. Talking of sign-boards, a story of Glasgow impudence is told *apropos* of these commercial necessities. A Scotch thief, they say, is the most impudent of all thieves, and a Glasgow thief the most impudent in Scotland. So thought Deacon Aitchison, the shoemaker in the Gallowgate. One morning the bare-footed, red-legged gillpie that swept his shop out, and opened his windows, reported to her master, who was bolting his oatmeal for breakfast, that a man with a fine sign-board was in the shop wanting to sell it cheap. The Deacon wiped his mouth and exclaimed:

"Odd,—that's queer! it has my ain name on't!"

"Nai doubt," said his customer, "I thoct it wad be o' mair use to you Deacon, than ony body else."

"The honest shoemaker made an easy bargain and paid the price, asking "no questions for conscience sake;" but he was an angry son of Crispin when he found that the scoundrel had sold him his own sign-board!

Talking of shoemakers,—another son of the craft established himself in a country town just opposite a man of the same trade. He stuck up over his door a magnificent new (not second hand) sign, and, having a classical taste, had caused the painter to inscribe in golden letters, *Mens sibi conscia recti*.

The new shop and the new style of sign, with the Latin motto, took amazingly, and the old established shoemaker saw, with dismay, that his customers were leaving him. To the Latin, however, he attributed all the mischief; so he took his shingle down, sent for the painter and had it all freshly gilt and varnished. When finished, it was hung up before the eyes of his discomfited rival with the words

MENS' AND WOMENS' SIBI CONSCIA RECTI!

We need not laugh too long at the honest shoemaker. Latin was not a necessary part of his education, but gentlemen connected with the press might be expected to know a little better; yet we remember an instance of the reverse, still, in a manner *apropos* of "Signs."

The *Herald* is, as all Montreal, at least, knows, ornamented with the representation of a lady, marvellously ill-at-ease, we should think, blowing from a trumpet the words *animos nocitate tenebro*. Some years ago, a person asked the late much-respected and deeply-regretted Mr. Kinnear, what these words might signify in English? Mr. Kinnear gave him the desired translation, when an employe in the office, who had been there in the days of poor Mr. Weir, of facetious memory, turned round and exclaimed: "Is that the true meaning? Dash that fellow, Bob Weir! He told me it meant "Hark! the herald angels sing!"

A quotation from sacred poetry reminds us of another quotation, and still *apropos* of Sign-boards. In the University of Edinburgh, a great many years ago, one student who was afterwards justly celebrated as a Minister of the Church of Scotland, was walking home with a couple of friends from a quiet little students' supper, when it occurred to them that it would be a good practical joke to take a Butcher's Sign down and hang it over the door of the Professor of Anatomy. The Sign-board was got down without much difficulty, but not without attracting the attention of a watchman, who sprung the rattle these gentlemen then always carried, and, accompanied by a dozen other "Charlies" gave chase after the Divinity Students, and the Butcher's board. The Students reached their quarters up on the fourth flat near the College, got in safely, and shut the door. The police, they knew, would soon trace them, and it was clear that the *corpus delicti* must be got rid of. They set to, with their knives, for want of other tool, cut it into small pieces, and threw them into the fire; but, ere half their task was done, the rapping of their pursuers was heard on the hall door. Dr. ——— (not then D.D.), ran to the door, opened it, as far as the chain allowed, and, in a solemn whisper, begged the policemen to be quiet,—that the household was engaged at "family worship."

Fifty years ago the performance of this domestic duty was nearly universal, and not even a "Charlie" would venture to intrude upon people so engaged; so the old half-blown myrmidons of

justice were content to wait outside till prayers were over, and recover their wind at the same time. They knew, however, that having marked their game down, they could not escape, except by a jump from a four-pair-front into the street. The besieged, on their part, whittled away with might and main, while the Doctor from some book read in a loud voice, as though most worthily engaged. His chapter, however, was getting very long, and the knives made slow progress, when "Charlie" knocked on the door to signify impatience, and, probably, doubt of all this piety. Things were looking desperate; the prospect of a night in prison was alarming, with an appearance before the Magistrate in the morning, a fine, and, perhaps, expulsion from College. As a final *ruse*, the Doctor "raised" a Psalm, or at least a Psalm tune. This was too real to be disregarded. "Charlie," like the lower orders of the Scotch of the olden time, was greatly impressed by Psalmody—that was a part of the worship all their own—interrupt the Minister you might, but nothing could be suffered to break in upon their nasal songs of praise. The police, accordingly, waited, and while the last notes were drawled most orthodoxly forth the last chip of the Butcher's sign-board perished in the flames, and, with it, all proof against the pious gentlemen within.

There was, now, no longer either excuse or need to keep the besiegers out, and the door was opened, upon which the watchmen (some half dozen in number) rushed into the students' parlour, where they found everything in good order,—chairs with their backs to the wall, except one on which, near the table, was seated the Dr. with a quarto edition of Ainsworth's Latin Dictionary before him—doubtless to awe the police-men with the idea that it was *The Book*. Taking the first word, the young Divine asked what was meant by disturbing a peaceful family at their exercises. "Pretty exercises, indeed," said the Celtic watchman, "where's Johnnie Craig's sign board? Exercises, quotha! and what is your text, if I make bould to speer?" "Our text," was the prompt reply, "is from Matthew; 'A wicked and adulterous generation seeketh after a sign and there shall no sign be given to it.'"

We could say a great deal about signs from the ship of Alexandria down to the present day, but Diogenes thinks he has done enough for one day to help the advertiser to a second-hand one, "Three feet by Two."

## CORRESPONDENCE.

TO THREE INFENUS DIOGENES:

this cums two enforme yu i am inn gudd Helth hoppin yu ar nott thee saime wieh i amm the troo an leggul edditer ande Propriatur off the Clown an Hors Koller, wieh is nott his worship thee Mair as yu will finde wrot inn thee Buk inn thee Corthons, Peter Muggles, Messingur, Wildkatie Banke wieh is meself, an ill yu sai to thee contrairee i will fite yu for festie pownd what i as now inn mi pokit in wildekatte banke nots wieh is moore nur yu cunn plane down tho yu wer to berrer frum all yure 3 subbscribers and put murfee yure nuseboi as is now in jale fur stelin from mi boi a parsil off thee Clown an Hors Koller in xchange fur is oun rubiche wieh is Dyo-ginees and i am goin to gett oute a halbens carkas agent yu an send yu two the Penetenshiary fur nott preventin himm an i ham to be seene evry dai beind the banke dore (sundaies exseptid) wen I can bee founde at my manshun in Kemp streete, a edditin mi paper.

PETER MUGGLES.

N.B.—Mrs Muggles's respecks and sais yu air no chusen vess-l nor gentlemann to rite so about his blessid wurship the Mair.

P. M.

## NEW PATENTS.

In the list of patents recently granted by His Excellency the Governor-General, DIOGENES was rather startled to find the following:

"James Wilson, of the town of St. Catharines, in the county of Lincoln, Province of Ontario, carpenter, for a certain new and useful art of distilling whisky."

What are Mr. Tilley, Mr. Dunkin, and the other Temperance members of the Cabinet about?

Another to a Mr. Strain, of Ontario, for an invention to be called "Strain's Easy Spinning Wheel."

Can a spinning wheel be *easy* when it is the offspring of a *Strain*?