

The Licensed Preacher.

BY REV. OLD MORTALITY.

MY LITTLE PETS:—Once more we have assembled in the name of truth, horse sense and humanity. Spring has opened upon us. The pretty little birds have chosen their mates, and kind nature has kissed our noble land and encircled it in her warm embrace. Whilst all nature is doing its best to make this country happy, I am sad; yes, I am sad, for Rev. Mrs. Roxey Jane Mortality is now engaged in concocting a cruel scheme to rob your parents and send them unmourned to a potter's field.

Roxey Jane was instigated to do this evil by reading a passage in a late paper. I will now read you the full particulars. Then you will know why I am sad. Then perhaps you will pity your poor, unfortunate preacher, who is so effectually under his wife's thumb. Oh, woman, woman! why did you not fall out of the apple tree and frighten to death the snake that tempted you to be such a sinner?

HOW HE PAID THE CHURCH DEBT.

To Father James Dougherty, rector of St. Monica's church, belongs the credit of originating a very novel plan for the payment of a church debt. It is nothing less than to have the lives of eleven of his parishioners insured, each naming the church as the beneficiary. In St. Monica's parish are more than 10,000 Roman Catholics. The parish property consists of a church, rectory, a sisters' home and a school. When the Rev. James Dougherty came from Kingston to take charge of the parish he found a floating indebtedness of more than \$100,000. He decided to pay it, and to do so he must have \$125,000. Having obtained the permission of Archbishop Corrigan, he tried to get it. None of the moneyed institutions objected to lending him \$100,000 on bond and mortgage, but none were willing to give him \$125,000. But an official of one of the institutions to which he applied—a life insurance company—suggested that if he would procure a certain amount of insurance they would advance the amount needed. The idea struck Father Dougherty favorably, and he discussed the matter with members of his flock. He proposed that some of them should insure their lives for \$10,000 each on the twenty-year endowment plan, making the church the beneficiary in each case and promising that the premiums should be paid from collections taken up for that purpose. Many clergymen and laymen at once offered to assist him. He soon obtained eleven \$10,000 policies on the endowment plan.

When the Rev. Mrs. Roxey Jane Mortality had read this novel paragraph she ordered a cup of strong tea, and while she sipped the sooth-

ing beverage she went into a state of deep meditation which lasted for about twenty minutes. Then she addressed me in the following manner:

"Dear hub" (when Roxey wishes to get on the windward side of me she invariably calls me dear hub), "I think well of the plan that Father James Dougherty pursued. You perhaps have noticed that Col. R. G. Ingersoll and several Frèethought papers and magazines have commenced to tell the riff-raff that the god of the Jews does not nor never did answer prayers; that people of horse sense rely more and more upon their own resources in order to eat and live. Now in these latter days the American divine is compelled to resort to drastic measures in order to keep his church and organization intact. As yet no man, woman or child has discovered what religious sect or denomination the god that the Jews created belongs to or favors. When a Catholic, Methodist, Baptist, Presbyterian, Lutheran or heathen joss house stands in the way of wind, lightning, earthquake or fire, it is wiped off the face of the earth, slick and clean, and the sun, moon and stars stop not to weep, nor do the waters of the sea cease to ebb and flow. And yet this so-called all-powerful god is supposed to see these churches and temples destroyed, and he stretches not forth his hand to save them, notwithstanding they were erected solely for his glory. There are over one hundred churches burned and destroyed every year in this so-called Christian country, and this god you talk about has never been known to lay a foundation stone or tack on a shingle.

"My dear hub, there certainly is something wrong in all this religious business. But I suppose just so long as our dunderheads are simple enough to be freely bled, we will have to bleed them. And now I come to the point. As I said, I think well of the plan that Father James Dougherty pursued. So we will now select from among our congregation a score or more of our most simple minded and have their lives insured for whatever amount we will be able to procure. We have bled them so effectually that their lives are now of no further cash value to us. Deacon Bloodsaw and our old standby, Deacon Ball-dick, will assist us in enthusing these people so everlastingly that they will want to die right on the spot and get a harp. And then, we will inter the remains and bank the cash!"

At this juncture Roxey laughed long and loud. Perhaps there is no preacher in America that has such a companion. Preachers' wives, so it is said, have much to contend with. As, for instance, Roxey writes the bulk of my discourses, ogles the rich and well-to-

do out of their money, and gets feeble minded men and women to make their wills in our behalf. While all this is true, I am far from being happy. I know that I am hoodooing the poor out of their hard-earned wages; I know that I am taking food, drink, clothing and homes from the ignorant and superstitious; I know that I am preventing their little children from receiving an education—an education that would enable them to earn a name and a home for the time of old age.

One thousand preachers are out of a job in New York. One hundred churches are burned and destroyed every year. One thousand preachers were sent to jail and prison during the past ten years. The Torch of Reason is exposing this so-called holy bible and its wild and inhuman doctrines. The papers and magazines are constantly showing us up in our true light. Verily, it does behoove us to gather fruit while the sun shines.

My pets, in conclusion I will say, whenever you meet a school teacher take off your hats and give a kindly salute. When you come upon a publishing house make your best bow unto it. For it is the school teacher and the printing press that is digging the grave to bury us.

Little ones, get wisdom and understanding if you have hopes of becoming good men and women. Also, be industrious, honorable and temperate in all things, then you will be happy. Amen.

Little Torches.

BY W. E. JOHNSON.

What the poor need is sympathy.—[D. L. Moody, quoted in Christian Herald.]

That is just like you Christians; when you find a hungry man, instead of giving him something to eat, you give him "sympathy".

A guilty conscience makes men fear to meet Jesus.—[Richmond Christian Advocate.]

But your bible commands us to fear God. Now when we do as told, you say it is a symptom of a "guilty conscience". You are too hard to please.

To whom do we owe our constitution but to George Washington, the father of his country, who was a devoted churchman and communicant?—[Rev. F. J. Clay Moran, in N. Y. World.]

And Thomas Jefferson, the unbeliever, who wrote the Declaration of Independence, without which there never would have been any constitution.

If Christ did not rise from among the dead, then is our faith vain. The Christian religion stands firmly founded on this grand and irrefragable fact that he who was crucified rose because he had accomplished our justification.—[Christian Commonwealth.]

That is something that you can never explain to an honest man; how the assassination of an innocent man can "justify" the deviltry and crimes of people who lived nearly two thousand years after his death.

Reflections After Recreation.

EDITOR TORCH OF REASON:

I have been on a fishing tour for the last two months, and my first question after returning was, what has the Torch been doing in my absence, and what progress has it been making? It is all right, I hope, but I will not rest content until I find out for sure; and the best way to do that is through free inquiry.

One great writer says that "Progress is our being's motto and hope," and that it is the duty of all to become enlightened. But how shall we attain this? Jefferson says, through free inquiry. The poet Grey once wrote,

"Where ignorance is bliss 'tis folly to be wise."

but Mr. Grey should have remembered that ignorance in any true sense is never bliss. No community is in a blissful state that has a preponderance of ignorance to contend with.

These are perilous times in which we are living. It is hard to tell what a day may bring forth. More money is being spent for the benefit of the churches and for religious purposes generally, more worthless ministers are at work trying to convert the world, more salvation armies, more Sunday schools of superstition and young men's Christian associations, together with numerous other devices too tedious to mention, all working for the Lord and the conversion of sinners, yet at no time in the world's history has crime in all its various forms, right in the face of all this pretended religious endeavor, come out more boldly and been more successful than it is at the present day. More desperate and unnecessary murders are committed, more bold, willful robberies, more devices to deceive and defraud mankind, and still they insist on calling this a Christian nation. O Christianity, thou art a jewel! See the state of affairs today. Two of the greatest so-called Christian nations the world ever knew engaged in a cruel, bloody war, in which thousands of lives will be sacrificed and millions of money spent, all for the glory of God. I wonder which side God is going to favor, if either; or is he going to favor both sides and laugh at their calamity, and tell them to pitch in, for he "came not to bring peace, but a sword". They are carrying out his instructions to a fraction.

One writer says, "We suffer much from the faults of others, but we

Concluded on 3d page.)