

"A TALE OF A HALO."

Remarkable Poem of Somewhat Infield Tendencies.

The Truth-Seeker Company, of 28 Lafayette place, New York, has just issued a well-written and strikingly humorous and caustic poem entitled "The Tale of a Halo." The characters introduced are St. Peter, St. Michael, St. Patrick, Beelzebub, and others. It deals largely with life in heaven and hell, and begins as follows:

St. Peter was gazing one day by the gate At a sign on the rampart, and, sad to relate, His face wore a look of surprise and chagrin, For the sign bore the legend, "No Smoking Within." While Peter was dozing, a cherub had passed And high on the rampart had made the sign fast; For the heaven-born privilege he had abused, And the smoke from his pipe was through heaven diffused. And the smoke from the pipe had a smell of its own, Too strong for the incense that hung round the throne.

Then he picked up his pipe, his tobacco and stool With a grunt of disgust at the new-fangled rule, And passed through the portal of jasper and gold Where smoking was not by the by-law controlled. "Strikes me," quoth the saint, "such a rule would work better If posted in hell and observed to the letter." And filling and lighting his pipe as he spoke, He seated himself for a good, quiet smoke.

Then follows the description of jealousy and warfare between St. Michael and St. Peter—Michael now being engaged in looking up Peter's record, that he might rob him of his office as gate-keeper. Michael discovers concerning his rival that he had been somewhat tough, but finds nothing conclusive:

He closed with a sigh; he could find nothing newer Pertaining to Peter, and, though he was sure That hell contained people much better than he, The fact that the pope and the most holy see Had made him a saint, put it out of his power To question his claims to his heavenly dower; For papal authority governed his own, And often exceeded the power of the throne.

And Michael, though premier and chief in command, Had little control over such of the band Of saints as held office, and this but increased His wish to have Peter disgraced at least. As to why he was given the care of the keys— It was one of the high and mysterious decrees In which the archangel had not had a voice. Most every one thought that the pope had the choice. Be this as it may, the appointment had been The source of a deep and most painful chagrin To the rest of the saints, and it almost had brought The most of them down to a point where they sought, By prying and spying and telling of tales, And pitiful dwelling on smallest details, To oust the old man from his saintly estate, — — — — — And have him relieved from the care of the gate.

Toward the last comes the fight between St. Peter and St. Patrick, and then there was a conference between St. Michael and Beelzebub. What follows is thus described:

"Excuse me," said Beelzebub, making a bow, "You'd better keep Peter just where he is now. He's backed by the power of the church and—hello!" Just then a commotion was heard in the row Of listening angels. St. Patrick appeared In a very excited condition; he cleared At a bound the short distance of space that remained, And, raising a hand that was bloody and stained, He made, ere the wondering fiend was aware, The pulsant sign of the cross in the air.

The inmates of heaven were not in a state To care much for anything, little or great; But what now occurred was sufficient to cause Their faith in their senses to waver, because Of the wondrous effect of the sign on the fiend.

He tremblingly lowered his head till he'd screened His eyes from the pantomime; then, a low whine Came whimpering forth, and he turned; but the sign Was repeated right under his nose; then he fell On his face, giving vent to an agonized yell: Then Michael, astonished, endeavored to speak, But his words were submerged in an ear-splitting shriek! For the wrathful St. Patrick now pressed the attack And traced the great sign of the cross on his back.

And a murmur of wonder arose on the air From the angels and host, as the shrieks of despair Rang out over heaven. St. Patrick now placed His foot on the neck of the fiend he'd disgraced. And standing in tatters, bespatter'd with mud, His knuckles disjointed and covered with blood (The blood was acquired from the gate-keeper's nose), His features disfigured, one ear in repose, One eye flashing fire and the other closed tight— He looked like a typified genius of fight.

The puzzled archangel now tried to induce The saint to desist, but he found it no use. He met him with volleys of stinging reproach, And seeing the wondering angels approach, He roundly abused them. I cannot repeat The language he used; it would sully my sheet.

But when he had finished the torrent of scorn He shouted to Gabriel: "Gimme that horn! Gimme that instrument—gimme it quick; He nades a good batin'. Oi bruk me old shtick On the head of St. Pater before Oi got in— Jist gimme that bugle; Oi want to be-gim!"

And, seizing the horn from the trumpeter's hand, Who gave it in spite of the leader's command, He yelled to his victim, "Come, git out of this! Yev been lang enough in the regions of bliss."

"Hold on!" said the archangel. "Patrick, don't strike The fiend when he's down, it is!"—"Hold your tongue, Mike! An' don't interfere wid me; Oim me own boss— Ye'd better go practice the sign of the cross!" A most disrespectful and impudent speech.

But Patrick, like Peter, was out of the reach Of Michael's authority; hence he was forced To witness a scene he would not have endorsed.

St. Patrick, now grasping the tail of the foe And jerking him upward, delivered a blow On his head with the horn; then he shouted, "Git out!" And away went the twain, while a jubilant shout Went up from the host. He continued to whack The terrified fiend on the head and the back ("Twas hard on the trumpet), and straight for the gate The tandem rushed on at a furious rate. And often the fiend would endeavor to rise, And as often the saint, with a growl of surprise, Would hang his whole weight on that suffering tail, And cause such a plan of escaping to fall.

Yet he might, even so, have got out of the place But heaven's great portal was slammed in his face. St. Peter was terribly thrashed in the fight, And this is the way that he vented his spite; For Patrick had let himself in with the key, And Peter had left the gate open to see What happened; and now, as the devil drew near, With Patrick made fast to the tail in the rear, In frenzy of rage and unsaintly chagrin He closed heaven's portal and locked the fiend in.

Then heaven's great legion came down with a rush, All shouting and howling; they met in a crush Surrounding the two, where they struggled and fought To reach the discomfited fiend who had brought Such trouble upon them. The first who arrived

Were jammed into the center; the nearest contrived Some blows to deliver, though not very true (St. Patrick got most, and the devil a few), And others climbed over the heads of the rest, Each making the sign of the cross on his breast. And around in a center the zigzag was borne With Patrick still pounding the fiend with the horn.

The above are a few lines from 70 illustrated pages. The book—which is entirely humorous—sells for 50 cents. The Truth-Seeker Company, 28 Lafayette place, New York.

EXPOSED IN THE CHURCH.

Member of a Polish Roman Catholic Church Rebukes a Minister at the Altar.

The covetousness, greed and parsimony of the Roman Catholic church are proverbial, but it is difficult, often, because of those concerned, to ascertain facts. The secrecy maintained by the authorities extends to the subordinates, and the influence wielded by the former makes the latter very chary of telling the truth—they do not know what damnation may be in store for them.

Occasionally, however, the truth leaks out, in spite of the pope and the devil. We have received the translation of an article published in the Polish paper *Echo*, published in Buffalo, N. Y., May 16, 1895, which is both interesting and instructive, and the facts of which we incorporate in this article.

It appears that on Sunday, May 12th, the Rev. Father Flackzy, a Polish priest, occupied the pulpit, and occasioned an exodus from the church comparable with the exodus from Egypt, for only a few old and helpless women remained to listen to the conclusion of the ceremonies.

He took as his text: "The evil of money," preaching strongly against the present abuse of that commodity, and endeavoring to show to his congregation that money was their great and only idol; that they thought of little else, and nothing of the future life and its promises. All their ambition seemed to be confined and restricted by the almighty dollar.

At once there was a murmuring heard throughout the church, and one man got up and cried out aloud: "That is enough, father priest. Do not preach to us any more about human covetousness; for if any one sins in this direction and runs after money, it is his own fault."

Then he turned to the congregation, and in the same loud and imperious tone of voice exclaimed: "Let us go out! Let us hear no more of such nonsense!"

And, our report goes on to say, the people, thinking it was the voice of God, went out and left the church empty, save for the presence of some old women, too devout to hear or too weak to walk.

The priest was compelled to get down from his position at the pulpit and leave the church with many better than he.

The next day he left the parish, which was already too uncomfortable for him, and, seeing the position he had placed himself in, he sent in his resignation to Bishop Ryan. But by some mental obliquity that functionary did not perceive the need for the retirement of his lieutenant, and told the "father" that he must return to his flock, even though they did not desire to have him among them any more.

This is only another example of unwise church management, not only on the part of Bishop Ryan, but on the part of all other prelates. They do not recognize that this is a free country, even in the matter of religion, and that a minister can be as obnoxious as a politician, and that there is an equal right to get rid of both.

Besides, the Polish people are peculiar, and the recent history of Detroit and Cleveland should show the bishop that they are not to be trifled with.

The best thing he can do is to reconsider his decision and have Father What's-his-name removed, and the wishes of his parishioners satisfied. After all, it is from them that he gets his bread and butter, and he is foolish to throw that away, even if those who gave it to him are Poles. If he doesn't look out, he will find a fight upon his hands that will take him all his time to manage.

There is not much sympathy with either side to be wasted, however, because Bishop Ryan is outwardly greedy, and his priest only in a secondary degree. But the priest made the mistake of going too far and being found out. He was not as clever in his money-grabbing schemes as some Toledo priests we could name.—*Toledo American*.

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