

father's, dealings with his Irish tenantry have acquired for his house the right to quarter in their coat-of-arms a skeleton on a field of blood, condemning emigration with which his name must ever be most cruelly associated, for the mortality among the exiles of the Lansdowne estates will never be forgotten in America? It is, indeed, a most encouraging token to find one of the most extensive amongst the absentee proprietors of Ireland calling out that his investment no longer pays him, and that he is anxious for the privilege of being allowed to remove his capital elsewhere. Our Irish absentees were, in fact, usurers of the coarsest kind, and all their attraction to the country they so long cursed, was that they were able to exact their murderous percentage. Now that that power has been wrested from them, they are anxious to make the best terms they can for themselves, and begone, and verily the country may wish them God-speed, although to do so will give proof that there exists there no small degree of Christian charity. Nevertheless, Lord Lansdowne and the other lords, of whom there were several, were informed by Lord Carlingford that they must curb their impatience until the effect of the Bright clauses of the Land Act had been fully tried. Let us hope, meantime, as the times seem hopeful, that an Irish Parliament may legislate on this matter to the full satisfaction of both landlord and tenant.

THE state of affairs on the Congo seems to grow in complication, not only France and Belgium are represented there respectively, and perhaps somewhat hostilely by Messrs Stanley and De Brazza, but England, Portugal and Italy are also reported to have shown some disposition to have a voice in the matter. Mr Stanley, attended by a company of Protestant missionaries who, let us hope, will flourish and make a profitable settlement under the protection of this doughty champion, is at Stanley Pool, where two steamers divided into pieces for the sake of convenient carriage, are being brought on men's shoulders up the precipitous country on the river's lower course, and by means of which, no doubt, the explorer will be able to defy the vengeance of the hereditary boatmen of the stream excited against him by his short method of dealing with them on his first visit. M. de Brazza, who is no friend to missionaries of any kind, let us add, is, meantime, advancing also towards the river, and also possessed of a vessel, intended for its navigation,—having, moreover, for his escort two detachments of *tirailleurs*, and a personal staff of 20 gentlemen—of whom one is the son of the famous M. Rochefort. But between the rival leaders and the sea, there intervenes the power of Portugal whose claim to the control of the mouth of the river, dating from time immemorial, England is said to have now recognized.—And a commercial expedition from Italy is, at the same time, said to be approaching. It is of some interest, then, to speculate as to what the issue of all this may be, and as to how the native races are to be introduced to European civilisation—not altogether impossibly as the spectators and auxiliaries, on one side or the other, of the contending forces of enlightenment,—of Protestant Christianity, championed by Mr. Stanley, and Freethought principles defended by M. de Brazza. Portugal, however, may perhaps secure a footing in the territory protected by her for Catholic missionaries, of whom, no doubt, there is sore need, but whose mission will be made more difficult than ever.

A TRIAL which excited a good deal of interest terminated the other day in London by the defendants' being found guilty. We allude to that of Messrs. Foote, Ramsey, and Kemp, indicted for publishing a blasphemous libel in the Christmas number of the *Freethinker*, and which had been published, as the paper itself said subsequently, "in order to cause a stir and carry our ideas far and wide." The Judge, in summing up the case, said that the legal meaning of blasphemy was any "contumelious reproach or profane scoffing against the Christian religion or the Holy Scriptures, and any act exposing the Holy Scriptures and the Christian religion to ridicule, contempt, or derision," and he denied that there was, in any of the works of eminent writers referred to by the counsel for the defence, anything which could approach to the illustrations contained in the *Freethinker*. But apart from all considerations of irreverence, or of the insult offered to holy things by such publications as that referred to, it strikes us as very necessary to prohibit the obtrusive issue of literature calculated to offend the feelings of Christian people, or such as may furnish to the ill-disposed a ready weapon of attack upon them. To defend the Christian religion altogether from being attacked is what nobody would now think of doing. In a state of society where all were united Christians, it would be possible and legitimate, we hold, to do this, and we believe it would be done with usefulness, not only to save from perversion the faith of the young and weak, but to preserve from disturbance the established form of things; but where disunion exists among Christians and all forms of religion are tolerated, it would be absurd and unjust to make any attempt of the kind.—Even a breach of the letter of the law on the part of such writers as Shelley, or Mill, or Spencer, or any of those mentioned in the list brought forward, could not without folly and inconsistency

be made the grounds of legal action. This, however, is a different thing from the issuing of a publication for the express purpose of making religion ridiculous and contemptible among the mob, and to gain proselytes, perhaps at the expense of causing divisions among families, and certainly at the risk of doing so, and being the means of annoyance and suffering in many forms. It is, undoubtedly, necessary to protect freedom of opinion, but the protection to be rational must be impartial, and the Christian sentiment of the day may claim a share of consideration as well as that which is non-Christian.—We hold, then, that obtrusive blasphemy being an offence against good manners and decency, and the rights and feelings of of the Christian public, is very justly punished. A feature, however, in connection with this trial, of no little significance, was the fact that the court and its precincts were filled with a crowd who sympathised warmly with the accused, and who reproached the Judge on his passing the sentence of 12 months' imprisonment on Foote with cries of "Christian, Christian."—The title "Christian," then begins to become one of reproach in England as that of *Bon Dieu-sard* is in Paris, and "so runs the world away

OF the spirit which guided Mr. Forster in his Irish career, and which still guides him in his denunciation of the Irish cause, we have found no more clear illustration than that which appeared in the *Bradford Chronicle*, a newspaper which we may reasonably look upon as inspired by him, or, at least, as taking his utterances and principles for its guide. Commenting on Mr. Parnell's reply, then, this newspaper speaks as follows:—"When Irishmen have set aside their evil passions and learned the value of human life; when they pay due respect to the rights of property and obey the law, adopting legitimate means for its alteration when it is absolutely wrong, then will have arrived the time for more remedial legislation, and not till then." The treatment due to Irishmen, then, is to be measured by their conduct rather than by the justice which is their right! And not only is it to be based on their conduct but upon such an interpretation of their conduct as may seem fit to men who dislike, and thoroughly misunderstand them. But what must be thought of the Statesmen from a careful study of whose motives and actions a journalist is able justly to derive such views? Meantime Macaulay speaks thus as to that which is the due of even an ill-behaved and untutored people? "Many politicians of our time," he writes in his "Essay on Milton," "are in the habit of laying it down as a self-evident proposition that no people ought to be free until they are fit to use their freedom. The maxim is worthy of the fool in the old story, who resolved not to go into the water until he had learnt to swim. If men are to wait for liberty till they become wise and good in slavery, they may, indeed, wait for ever."

MR. BRYCE in his speech the other night at New Plymouth referred to a history that had recently been published, in which he affirmed that he had been grossly calumniated, and in a manner for which he meant to call the slanderer to account.—Nor will it be denied by anyone, when the passage alleged by Mr. Bryce to be calumnious is read by him, that a very emphatic remonstrance, and a convincing proof of the falsehood of the accusation brought against the Minister is necessary, not only to clear his own character from a very horrible stain which has been cast upon it, but to deliver the Colony from the disgrace of counting among the members of its Government a man who had at any time been guilty of so frightful a deed as that imputed to him. The passage alluded to, and which occurs in Rusden's "History of New Zealand" runs as follows: "The literary cravers for blood were soon to be gratified on the West and East Coasts by events of which some were not officially reported, nor told in Mr. Gudgeon's 'Reminiscences of War.' Lieutenant Bryce, who was in after years a Native Minister, distinguished himself. Some women and young children emerged from a pah to hunt pigs. Lieutenant Bryce and Sergeant Maxwell of the Kai Iwi Cavalry dashed upon them, and cut them down gleefully and with ease. This exploit will be looked for in vain in Mr. Gudgeon's book, which records a rash and unfortunate affair in which, subsequently (December 28th), Sergeant Maxwell, riding up to Titokowaru's pah, Tauranga-ike, was shot. But the treatment of the children was not unknown. Dr. Featherston, the Superintendent of the Province of Wellington, expressed his horror; Banghiwinui declared that he would not have joined the local forces if he had thought them capable of such acts. He earned thereby the hatred of Bryce, who, long afterwards, when Native Minister, dismissed Banghiwinui from office. Bryce earned among the Maoris a title which will cling to him. They called him *kohuru* (the murderer)." If this, indeed, were true—and let us hope not only for Mr. Bryce's sake but for that of the whole Colony, as we said, and perhaps even for the British name generally, that it may be speedily and convincingly proved to be false, there would be no further need for Mr. Bryce to apologise for shaking hands with Te Kooti, or to explain that he had done so only in the public interests. For, in that case, Mr. Bryce would shake hands with a comrade most suitable for him; or, if there were any difference, it would be rather in