

bounty given—\$15 per scalp—has had the effect of thinning them out wonderfully and extermination is close at hand. It is estimated that the Russian forests in 1880 contained 170,000 of these voracious pests, and that they, with the assistance of bears, devoured yearly 200 children and travelers, 500 horses, 1000 oxen and 4000 other tame animals; occasionally, in time of great hunger, they will devour each other, but this gratifying performance does not seem to be carried on extensively enough to make much of a diminution. In Austria, we are advised that 1200 of them, together with 200 hyenas and 160 bears on an average are killed every year. And thus it goes the world around, only we are doing and have done very much better than any other part of it that was ever overrun wholly or in part by wild animals.

CUSTER'S LAST RALLY.

The painting of Custer's Last Rally now on exhibition at 78 w., Second South street, is a work of art which amply repays one for the time and fee invested in seeing it. It is a heroic subject and is treated historically, not fancifully. General Custer, whose command has been thinned by the savages down to less than forty men, has huddled them together in the best position he could, and there, with no shelter, save a few horses dead and alive, from the murderous fire of 8000 of the Indians surrounding the little band, they fight and die, only one man—a scout—escaping. The picture is wonderfully realistic, the expression on some of the doomed men's faces being positively life-like; while all the minutæ are as carefully depicted as is possible on canvas. The coloring throughout is fine and the general effect impressive to a profound extent. It is the work of John Mulvaney, an Irish-American artist, and deserves to rank with the great pictures of the day.

AN EX-EDITOR'S SATURDAY TALK.

Latter-day Saints must always feel an interest in such discussions of theology as have taken place at the recent trials of prominent religious teachers by assemblies of their fellow-ministers—especially in cases like that of Dr. Briggs, one of whose beliefs is that there is such a principle as "progressive sanctification." He does not believe that man's future is unalterably fixed when he leaves this life; but that repentance and progress are possible beyond the grave. This is such a departure from the doctrine heretofore believed and taught by the orthodox sects that many are shocked at it, and they feel that a teacher who entertains such views ought to be silenced. Whether or not the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints is recognized as the source from whence light has come concerning the future condition of man and the true nature of everlasting punishment, certain it is that similar views to those taught by the Elders of the Church upon this and many other doctrinal

points are now entertained and advocated by men of prominence in different sects.

As early as March, 1830, the Lord, through His servant, Joseph Smith, in speaking of those upon whom His condemnation should fall and who should be found at His left hand, said:

"Nevertheless it is not written that there shall be no end to this torment, but it is written endless torment. Again, it is written eternal damnation."

* * * For, behold, I am endless, and the punishment which is given from my hand, is endless punishment, for endless is my name; wherefore:

"Eternal punishment is God's punishment."

"Endless punishment is God's punishment."

In February, 1832, a revelation from the same source threw a flood of light upon the possibilities for the future of man in the life beyond this, and clearly showed that even the souls in a state of punishment would be ministered unto by those sent from regions of glory for their benefit. Subsequent revelations threw still more light upon the fate of those who had left these mortal scenes without having had the opportunity of obeying the ordinances of the Gos. el. Undoubtedly the information thus received upon these interesting subjects has attracted the attention and aroused the thought of liberal-minded men; for these doctrines have been taught through the press and from the platform for many years both in America and Europe. This wide-spread publicity has brought them to the knowledge of people of all classes of society who could not fail to be impressed, to a greater or less extent, by them; because the doctrine that countless multitudes of mankind will burn forever in hell-fire, out of which there is no possible redemption, has shocked beyond expression many people and caused many to abandon religion. Men of the noblest character have revolted at the teachings of professed ministers of Christ concerning the fate of those who, moral and upright and of exemplary lives, had failed before their death to be converted.

In a recent article published in an English magazine—*Nineteenth Century*—a prominent scientific man, St. George Mivart, attempts to relieve the Roman Catholic church, of which he is a member, from the discredit of having committed itself to any dogma about hell which inevitably conflicts with reason and conscience. It is a hopeful sign, and it proves how the heaven of truth is working, when a prominent member of the proudest, oldest and most dogmatic religious body in Christendom undertakes such a task as this.

His article bears the strange title, "Happiness in Hell." He admits that the Catholic church is definitely committed to the doctrine that souls condemned to hell remain there for all eternity. The church, he says, sets before men but two kinds of eternal existence—an eternal existence in the possession of heaven and an existence in eternal exclusion from it—which is hell. There can be no question, he states, that the Catholic church is irrevocably committed to the doctrine that not only are the damned damned for all eternity, but that their condition is but faintly represented by

descriptions of the most extreme and terrible torture. And yet he is determined to endeavor to prove to the world that it is consistent with Catholic faith to entertain different views—views which are more in consonance with modern perceptions concerning justice and benevolence—and that it is even possible to enjoy a degree of happiness in hell. While he admits that the tenants of hell are its tenants eternally, he asserts that a process of evolution takes place in hell and that the existence of the damned is one of progress and gradual amelioration, though never, of course, to the extent of raising the lost to "supernatural beatitude." To sustain himself in this view he quotes the names of certain "Fathers" of the Catholic church, who, he says, held that a mitigation was vouchsafed to the damned from time to time. He calls the doctrine monstrous and revolting—to which, in his opinion, stark atheism itself would be a preferable belief—that God could punish men, however slightly, still less could damn them for all eternity, for anything which they had not full power to avoid, or for an act the nature or consequences of which they did not fully understand.

He explains what he thinks has been the reason why hell has been described as a place of such horrors:—It was in order to bring home to men what their loss would be by representing that loss by means of symbols which would most effectively strike the imaginations of the greatest number of mankind. But he does not think that it necessarily follows that hell is such a place as they described; it is only as contrasted with heaven that it will bear such a description. He presents to his readers an imaginary picture of a man, intelligent, amiable and wealthy, enjoying the esteem of all who know him, the devoted affection of his family, the peace of a good conscience, and the happiness of a natural love of and union with God. Yet dying unbaptized, he will, according to Catholic teachings, he says, be in hell, and this will be the lot of the immense number of mankind who have died unbaptized. But though subject to "pena damni," or state of loss, this writer alleges that is no cause of regret to them. As he puts it, not having "been raised to the order of grace" they have no aptitude or faculty for any higher condition and are content. He appears to think that even the positively damned may, possibly, be unconscious of their state, and may, possibly, have the consolations of a hoped-for amelioration, or they may find in hell a certain kind of harmony with their own condition and the society of souls like-minded with themselves. His conclusion, after reasoning at some length is, that "Hell in its widest sense must be considered (as for a certain class) an abode of happiness transcending all our most vivid anticipations," and "there is, and there will for all eternity be, a real and true happiness in hell."

This writer is careful to impress upon his readers that "Purgatory has nothing to do with the question here discussed, since it is but a passing, temporary state."

I have quoted with some fullness the