

ter "neither an honest politician, nor an honest man." The Speaker called on him to withdraw the words, which he did, but observed that the Rules of the House "militated against the truth." The Speaker thereupon named him, and by a majority of 207 to 12 he was suspended for the sitting—a ridiculous penalty, which any Member would encounter, if it made his seat the safer.

Mr. Charles Robert Darwin, the most eminent of the scientific naturalists and thinkers of this planet, died on Wednesday afternoon, in his own house at Down, after a short illness of only about twenty-four hours, from some affection of the heart. He was grandson of the well-known Erasmus Darwin, the author of "The Botanic Garden," and on the maternal side was grandson also of Josiah Wedgwood, the eminent potter. Born at Shrewsbury, on February 12th, 1809, so that he had recently completed his seventy-third year, he was educated at Shrewsbury School, under Dr. Butler, and then went to Edinburgh, and subsequently to Christ's College, Cambridge, where he graduated in 1831. In the same year, Captain Fitzroy having offered to give up part of his own cabin to any naturalist who would accompany him on the voyage which his ship, the "Beagle," was to make for scientific purposes, Mr. Darwin volunteered his services gratuitously, on condition that he should have the entire control of his collections, all of which he subsequently gave to various public institutions. His "Voyage of the Beagle,"—touching the chief points of a five years' cruise,—is still one of the most delightful of his works, and shows vivid powers of description, as well as keen scientific shrewdness. His first great scientific work, "The Structure and Distribution of Coral Reefs," was published in 1842. After that a series of scientific works appeared, of which the greatest, of course, are those on "The Origin of Species" and "The Descent of Man," books which have completely transformed the biological science of our day. Probably many more people from all countries would agree in regarding the name of Darwin as the greatest name of our century, than could be got to concur in favour of any other name, political, poetical, imaginative, or military. And though some great fields of thought were almost a blank to Mr. Darwin, no man ever deserved fame better, for he was modest, patient, and faithful, even up to the high level of his genius.

The trial of Roderick Edward Mac Lean for high treason, for firing a pistol at the Queen, on March 2nd last, at Windsor, took place before the Lord Chief Justice and Mr. Baron Huddleston on Wednesday, at the Reading Assizes, and ended, as every one who knew the facts was convinced it would do, in his acquittal on the ground of insanity. The prisoner had suffered from a very serious fall, causing injuries to the head, in 1866, and was declared of unsound mind in 1874. In 1880 he was placed in an asylum at Western-super-Mare and was discharged on July 21st last year as cured. Since then he seems to have wandered about the country in a very feeble state of mind, being under the profound conviction that persons in blue were hostile to him, and that the numeral 4 had in some way a maleficent effect upon him. The prisoner was, of course,

ordered to be placed in custody during her Majesty's pleasure, and it is to be hoped that he will not again be hastily pronounced "cured."

The Austrian Government reports the suppression of insurrection in Bosnia-Herzegovina, but it does not propose to reduce the very large force posted there in garrison. On the contrary, it desires so strongly to keep that garrison intact, that it has asked the Delegations to vote a further sum of £2,300,000 for the maintenance of the troops till winter. The Delegation more especially the Hungarian one, are most unwilling; but as the Ministry has given assurance that the money is indispensable, and that the *status quo* shall be maintained in the provinces, it will probably be voted. The Minister, in applying for the money, was most emphatic in his assurances that the Russian Consuls had lent every assistance, and that the Montenegrins had given no occasion for remonstrance. The cue in Vienna, as in Berlin, is evidently tranquillity, for the present.

A biography of M. de Giers, the new Foreign Minister and Vice-Chancellor of Russia, has been published in the *Times*. According to this, he is sixty one-years old, of Swedish origin, though by training entirely Russian, and has risen, not very rapidly, through every department of his office. While abroad he served principally in Constantinople, Teheran, and Egypt, and he has always been considered more especially familiar with the Asiatic Department of Russian foreign business. He was much trusted by Prince Gortchakoff, has been virtually Foreign Minister for five years, and is supposed to be devoted to peace. The supposition may turn out erroneous. As we understand the different accounts, M. de Giers is the model of a successful Permanent Under-Secretary, extremely painstaking, well informed, and acceptable to superiors; and a man of that kind at the head of an empire always desires to show that he is more than an official, and to leave a name in history. M. de Giers may give the world trouble yet.

A very extensive series of fraud has been discovered in the North of England. Three or four confederates, behind whom a clever lawyer is supposed to stand, have for some time past kept offices in Birmingham, Manchester, Sheffield, Glasgow, and other places; at which they received clients who claimed old family property. They invariably told these persons that their claims were substantial, demanded fees for inquiry, fees for registration, fees for drawing powers of attorney, and fees, often heavy, for pretended legal proceedings. As a belief in illusory family claims is widely spread in England, they had hosts of clients, 400 in Birmingham alone, and some hundreds in Manchester, and are believed to have netted some thousands. The police and the lawyers suspected their trade, but could not act, until one victim sought the advice of a Birmingham solicitor, named Ratcliffe, who, with great spirit and a lawyer's usual contempt for legality, seized in the "Agency" office a quantity of criminating papers. The principals are supposed to have fled, and it is a little doubtful if their confederates can be punished, the designers of the fraud having carefully drawn all documents so as to make it appear that

they were agents in business inquiries. The best hope seems to be that they usually said that they were aware of the existence of property which did not exist, and this may bring them within the statute. Otherwise, the encouragement of ridiculous hopes, for fees voluntarily paid by self-deluded victims, hardly amounts to a criminal offence. If it did, half the disreputable lawyers in the country might be placed in the dock at once.

The remains of Mr. Darwin were interred on Wednesday in Westminster Abbey, by the side of those of Sir John Herschel; an immense crowd of all kinds, from the members of his own family to men of eminence of all sects and views, Ministers, chiefs of Opposition, statesmen, men of literature, art, science, and law all crowding to render to Mr. Darwin's great genius and noble character the last tribute of respect. The burial in Westminster Abbey of one who has caused so great a change in European opinion in the direction opposed to that of orthodox Christian theology, is an event which could hardly have taken place ten years ago, certainly not amid demonstrations of such universal respect. Does it mean that the general belief in Christianity has greatly dwindled in the last decade? We should say not. Probably the number of real believers in Christ has increased, rather than diminished, in that period. But it does mean undoubtedly that men are estimated infinitely more by their characters and lives, and infinitely less by their mere religious opinions than they were then.

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