

NOTICES OF NEW BOOKS.

THE DAY AND THE HOUR. A Sketch of the Future, extracted from the Bible.
By Captain W. A. BAKER, Royal Bombay Engineers. Wm. Mackintosh. 1865.

THIS is surely one of the most marvellous books that ever was published. It is the work of a man apparently driven mad by the intricacies of Prophecy, and yet of a man sound enough in mind to perform the practical duties of a captain of engineers. Speculations into futurity, founded on the old prophets and on the Book of Revelations, have been before now put forth both by those who have believed and by those who have simply wished to make others believe,—both by the credulous and by the deceitful; but I doubt whether any detailed promise of an assured and specified Millennium has ever been ushered into the world with so complete a faith and so anxious a desire to make converts, as that which is here given to us by Captain Baker;—and certainly none less likely to make converts, in spite of the faith and zeal of the author. Captain Baker is doubtless a correct arithmetician, and we must believe that he has done good service as such in the Bombay Engineers. He knows the use of figures, and probably in all the ordinary concerns of life is able so to use them that they shall not deceive him. Now, in this great purpose of his life,—for doubtless he regards his readings of prophecy as the one great end and object of his being,—he has trusted solely to figures, and has allowed them to lead him to conclusions which will cause him to be regarded as insane by everybody who examines them. He tells us that four months before the completion of his work he knew little of prophecy, and was simply acquainted with the Bible as ordinary professional men are acquainted with it. He then read Elliott's "Horæ Apocalypicæ," and being much struck with that, he "set to work to read the Book of Revelation and the Prophets" for himself,—and in four months' time had, by the light of his own reason, or, as he says himself, by "his own brain, worked on by the Spirit of God," brought forth a result, absolutely proved to be true by arithmetic, as to which he has no shadow of doubt, as to which he conceives that no rational man can have a doubt,—and this result he gives us. His last reading of prophecy, which is of course the one which concerns us all most nearly, is as follows:—

M. 1801. ("M." means 3 years and 3-10ths of a year, which period of time, Captain Baker tells us, is a minute on God's clock,—was moreover the duration of Christ's ministry on earth,—and is therefore chosen by him as his favourite unit in all his calculations). M. 1801. A.D. April, 1878. This is the date of the commencement of the period to which the following reading of prophecy refers:—

"Paris taken June 20, or Sept. 4, 1878. Eclipse of the Sun July 29. Shooting stars 13 to 24 August. Fearful storms the last week of August, causing great sickness in Antichrist's army in Palestine. Sign of the Son of Man appears about Sept. 1. Christ appears descending on Mount Olivet at sunset of Sept. 20, 1878."

So that we have the exact day and hour given us, and that exact day and hour are now distant from us only thirteen years! Under such circumstances I should be interested to know whether Captain Baker will educate his young children, if he has any, in the usual way, and especially whether he puts out his money at the ordinary rate of interest.

But the above prophetic assurance, though it would be the one thing of interest to us if we could bring ourselves to believe it, is by no means the most attractive promise that is made to us, seeing that we none of us shall have any faith in these promises. That the Emperor of the French is to be Antichrist is not a new idea with Captain Baker; but the captain asserts the fact more positively

than they who have been before him, and declares that Napoleon III. shall also become Pope. He has had some little hesitation on this point because Antichrist is to have a nephew, whereas the Emperor has no nephew; but he has, he tells us, found out that the Hebrew for nephew may mean anything; and therefore, though his informant in Hebrew denies that the convenient word can be taken to signify cousin, Captain Baker will not be so circumscribed. "Surely," this is Captain Baker's argument, "if there is no word in Hebrew for cousin, and *neched*" (*neched*, which it seems is Hebrew for nephew, is the word in dispute) "may mean almost anything, it may mean cousin." Thus the difficulty about Antichrist's nephew is overcome. Prince Napoleon is to stand for the *neched*; and the Emperor is to be Pope and Antichrist. In these capacities, and with his joint terrestrial and infernal authority, he is to conquer all lands—except Britain. This is to be done between 1871 and 1878. Britain shall stand triumphant. Our Queen Victoria shall be the new Queen of Sheba, and she shall come to Palestine "from the uttermost parts of the earth" to visit the coming Messiah, the uttermost parts meaning India, of which she is now Empress. Indeed, if I can understand Captain Baker's calculations aright, she ought to be the Queen of Sheba already. And the Prince of Wales is to be the Prince of the Covenant. "Antichrist," we are told, "will cast down and stamp upon some of the rulers of Europe, but he will never stamp upon the Prince Regent of England;"—for the Queen will by this time have abdicated in his favour. We all hope that Napoleon never may stamp on our Crown; but we shall still be as prone as ever to see that his Royal Highness's security is fixed on some base beyond that given to him by prophecy.

To me it is lamentable,—a thing full of melancholy, to see the mind of a good man, a man sedulous, educated, and of his nature truthful, thus made to wander away, lured from its path by an ignis-fatuus of religious curiosity, "like sweet bells, jangled, out of tune and harsh." The poor worker at arithmetical calculations has gone mad among his figures, losing the balance of his reason from unrest and too violent a strain upon his energies. In his Preface he assures us that his work is inspired, and in his Conclusion he says, "I am going to provide the world with the future means of proving me either an inspired prophet of God, or a mad, presumptuous fool!" To me it is sad that any such man should provide the world with the means of doing this;—as Captain Baker no doubt has done.

ANTHONY TROLLOPE.

DIARRHŒA AND CHOLERA, THEIR ORIGIN, PROXIMATE CAUSE, AND CURE THROUGH THE AGENCY OF THE NERVOUS SYSTEM BY MEANS OF ICE. By JOHN CHAPMAN, M.D. Trübner & Co.

THIS is a remarkable pamphlet, on a subject profuse in pamphlets and suggestions at a time when general alarm stimulates the hypothetic faculty, and when the desire to clutch at a remedy makes men credulous of means. As an hypothesis, the explanation proposed by Dr. Chapman is eminently scientific, though it requires extensive confrontation with experience before it can take its place among medical theories. As a method of treatment, the method proposed by Dr. Chapman has the merit of being very simple and very inexpensive; but whether it has the supreme merit of being effective must be decided hereafter, for with wise candour he confesses that although it has been effective within his experience, the range of his experience is but small. *If* the cause of Diarrhœa and Cholera be, as he suggests, an over-crowded state of the blood vessels supplying the nervous centres which rule over the bowels, then it follows that a sedative influence acting on those nervous centres, lessening the amount of blood in them, would remedy the evil, and the application of ice is a proved means of exercising such an influence. All depends on this initial *if*. Grant that, and you must grant all. And Dr. Chapman advances reasons which render this *if* probable, if not proven; but he is too well informed not to be