

**CAN IT BE TRUE?,
TWO
VOLUMES, VOL. I**

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Can it be true?, two volumes, Vol. I by Francis Henry Cliffe

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FRANCIS HENRY CLIFFE

**CAN IT BE TRUE?,
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CAN IT BE TRUE?

By the same Author.

A B E L :

A Tragedy.

From "THE QUEEN," February 2nd, 1884 :

“The preface to Mr. Cliffe’s poem is so clear and intelligent and in such excellent prose that we are prepossessed in his favour. The writing of a tragedy is a serious undertaking, and one to which nobody should commit himself without careful study and preparation. The author of ‘Abel’ seems to be aware of this, and has deliberately formed and carried out his plan. He believes that dramas founded on Biblical events ought to have a large admixture of lyric poetry and other features which he enumerates. The poem, consequently, abounds in lyrical passages and elements. It opens with a monologue by Michael, which is followed by another by Satan. Two choruses, one of Angels and one of Demons, occupy a decidedly conspicuous position ; the remaining chief speakers being Adam and Eve, Cain and Abel and their wives. Much of the dialogue is animated, and Mr. Cliffe’s facility of versification is everywhere manifest. The composition as a whole is graceful, sometimes vigorous, but with occasionally feeble lines. The language employed is consistent, and no charge of irreverence can be brought against the author. He writes as a man of culture, and under the influence of classical models. We find the poem very interesting, and regard it as worthy of praise for many admirable qualities, originality being one of them.”

REMINGTON & Co., Henrietta Street, Covent Garden.

CAN IT BE TRUE?

BY

FRANCIS HENRY CLIFFE

Alcun non può saper da chi sia amato
Quando felice in su la ruota siede ;
Però c'ha i veri e i falsi amici a lato,
Che mostran tutt' una medesima fede.

AGOSTO.

TWO VOLUMES

VOL. I

LONDON
REMINGTON AND CO PUBLISHERS
HENRIETTA STREET COVENT GARDEN

1887

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CHAPTER I.

THE Rev. Frederick Berner, having a large family and a small income, and expecting an addition to the former and none to the latter, was becoming uneasy as to the future before him. He spoke on the subject to his wife, and she agreed with him that something must be done to improve the state of their finances. At last a happy thought struck her.

"My dear Frederick," she said, "I know a very simple way of obtaining money. We have several spare rooms in our house, which is larger than we require, now that our children are at school. Why not advertise for pupils?"

"Pupils, my dear?" he asked, dubiously. "I do not think that would answer, as I have never taught anybody anything in my life."

"Never mind," retorted the lady, nothing daunted. "When you have sufficient pupils you can engage masters. There are plenty of clever men to be had, and on very reasonable terms; I assure you there are."

Her husband did not seem convinced that cleverness was so rife, but he promised to think about it.

"Not at all," she said; "you will decide at once. I know you too well to let you put it off. Postpone it for one day and you may postpone it for ever."

He felt the truth of this remark; but as he was loth to exert himself, he made one further attempt to obtain a reprieve.

"But have you sufficiently considered, Charlotte, the inconvenience to which we shall be put? How will you be able to endure the racket of boisterous children?"

"There is no necessity for taking children," she answered. "Young men would pay better, and are far less of a responsibility."

"I am afraid I could never manage young men," he said, despondingly.

"Because you have never tried. My dear Frederick, how often have I told you that in this life we must be energetic? If you will not rouse yourself now, I do not know how we shall pay our bills next October."

"But we shall have to make outlays to receive the young men, and I am not sure there will be any profits."

"Of course," his wife said, "you must make the terms as high as you possibly can."

"How much do you think I ought to ask?"

"Two hundred and fifty guineas per annum," said Mrs. Berner, positively.

Her husband gave a low whistle.

"I should consider myself lucky with half."

"Nonsense!" she exclaimed. "You must not make yourself too cheap. The higher the terms are, the higher you will stand in the estimation of parents."

One of the foremost articles in the reverend gentleman's creed was his intense belief in his wife's superior knowledge of the world.