

THE HOMILETIC REVIEW.

VOL. XXIII.—MARCH, 1892.—No. 3.

REVIEW SECTION.

I.—THE HEALING OF DIVISIONS.*

BY THE RIGHT REV. A. CLEVELAND COXE, D.D., BISHOP OF WESTERN NEW YORK,
BUFFALO, N. Y.

THERE are many who begin to view the actual condition of our country, in its religious and moral aspects, with alarm. A vast increase of territory and of population has made the problem of popular evangelization a very perplexing one. The profligate waste of Christian resources, spiritual and material, implied in the perpetuation of sects, calling for five or six men even in villages where one pastor would suffice, and leaving corresponding destitution in the new States and Territories, where not even one can be had for growing centres soon to be large towns and cities; this of itself is a portent over which believers can no longer sing optimistic hymns of contentment without inviting retribution. We are not fulfilling the conditions of our social life as Christians; and God's holy Word gives us warning, in the messages to the Seven Churches, of what we must expect from the sword of His mouth, "whose eyes are as a flame of fire," when He visits His servants and searches their hearts. We shall find no remedy for the emergency save in the united energies of those who believe in Christ and love Him supremely.

A frightful portent, besides, is that of an immigration which in dark disguise is nothing less than invasion. The overflow of the Goths and Vandals upon Spain and Italy was not more formidable to primitive Christian civilization than that which now rushes, like a Gulf Stream, into our tides of life, menacing and changing all the conditions which have made us a strong nation hitherto. It lends itself immediately, with deadly effect, to every current that breeds pestilence; it makes the air we breathe unwholesome—nay, infectious; it is moral poison. The mongrelized Latin population of Mexico and South America show whitherward all this points and tends. The higher civilization introduced by our forefathers, and which only is capable of sustaining free constitutions and liberty with law, is already perishing. This squalid and ignorant influx is made the arbiter of our destinies, and used by depraved politicians without scruple as the venal balance of power on which their plots and schemes depend. Hitherto there has existed among us a community of fundamental ideas. This great republic grew up accordingly from its colonial seed, like the oak, "whose seed is in itself," and which is invigorated by storm no less than by sunshine. From the days of Alfred, the

* This article, which was delivered by Bishop Coxe as a sermon from the text Phil. iii. 16, before the De Lancey Divinity School, Geneva, N. Y., November 30, 1891, appears as the first of a series on the general subject of Church union, to be contributed by representative writers from the various denominations in the Christian Church.—Eds.