

age of opportunity for doing good, for at no preceding period of the world were there such facilities for missionary operations as the present affords, and it cannot but be apparent to every reflecting mind, from the passing events of the day, that the "time to favour Zion, yea that the set time is come," and an opportunity is placed within our reach of being extensively useful to our fellow men.

The present state of the world is favorable to Missionary operations.—Every man who has made himself acquainted with its last twenty years' history, must know that it has undergone a considerable change during that period, very favourable to Missionary exertions. The laudable efforts of the Bible Society in promulgating to mankind, in about one hundred and sixty different languages, the wonderful works of God, have succeeded in moving the nations, and exciting amongst them a spirit of inquiry relative to religious truth. The Bible, like the precursor of Emmanuel, has gone forth and is preparing "in the wilderness a high way for our God," who is at the head of that small, but invincible army which is destined to overthrow all opposition, and to subdue the whole world. That the way is preparing for this noble achievement, must be obvious even to a superficial observer. The two great Antichristian powers are in a state of portentous agitation, and many of their votaries are beginning to betray signs of dissatisfaction with the absurdities of their respective creeds. The Eastern churches are awakening from their slumbers, and crying to those of the West "give us of your oil for our lamps have gone out." The most intelligent amongst the idolatrous tribes are manifestly becoming perplexed and disgusted with the principles and rites of paganism. Copies of the Holy Scriptures are almost every where anxiously desired, and eagerly perused. And heart thrilling voices from various sections of the unchristianized world, imploring spiritual help, are reiterated in the ears of the Directors of Missionary Societies. Thus are the fields "white to the harvest, and although we do not state that in every part of them, laborers would be allowed to reap without much toil and opposition, yet we are bold to say that these things concurring simultaneously, are signs of the times which call upon us to "put in the sickle and reap, for the harvest is ripe."

The present standing of the British nation in the world, is another circumstance favorable to the progress of Missions. Without intending any invidious reflection on other nations, I feel all the confidence which truth inspires, in avowing that Great Britain exerts a paramount influence amongst the nations of the earth. Some yield to this influence from motives of attachment; others, from those of fear. For at whatever court, or in whatever country, she fails to secure respect, the roaring of the British Lion never fails to inspire dread. That such is her influence, is evident from the protection which her very name affords. It is like a strong tower in which many foreigners find safety, whilst travelling in the lands of peril and death; and even her envious foes are often found amongst those individuals whilst far away from the land of their birth. Connected with this influence are, her extensive possessions. She has her flourishing colonies in every quarter of the globe, which are increasing in number and magnitude; and even millions of the heathen are under the control of her salutary sceptre. Her banners are waving in the breeze of every zone, and the sun is ever gilding some portion of her dominions. Her canvas is swelling on every sea, and her thunders shaking every continent. These things furnish an opportunity to us as Britons, of being extensively useful in the cause of missions, and not only amongst the civilized, but the most barbarous and degraded of the human race. Situated as her possessions are in the Mediterranean, in Africa, in Asia, in Australia, in America, and the different islands of the sea, they open before us in their respective vicinities, immense fields for missionary achievement, giving us immediate access to millions of our fallen species, and affording communication either directly or indirectly with almost all the tribes of men, to whom we can now extend our religious charity, under the respectable and influential patronage of the British flag. Blind indeed must be that man who does not behold in these things the operations of a gracious providence, which designs the British nation to take a leading part "in building the walls of Zion." With her is pre-eminently

deposited the everlasting gospel, and these things mark her out as a chosen instrument to take the most active part in its diffusion.—Luko the Angel in the Apocalypse, she is to fly in the midst of Heaven, bearing on her extended pinions the sacred deposit, that she may convey it to "them that dwell on the earth, and to every nation, and kindred, and tongue, and people." And I am happy to say that having already commenced her flight, she has for some time been on the wing, and it is *this* that renders her invincible in the field of contest,—that crowns her arms with victory,—and extends her borders in the earth. It is *this*, which makes antichristian nations faint in her presence, and causth Bel to bow down, and Nebo to stoop before her. And it is *this*, rather than the excellency of her constitution, or the wisdom of her statemen, or the prowess of her armies, or the strength and valor of her navy, that gives her such influences, respectability, and dominion in the world. Britain is Heaven's almoner, and therefore Providence opens her way amongst the nations for the distribution of Heaven's bounty. She blows the trumpet of the Lord in her camps, and the "Lion of the tribe of Judah" roars in her defence. No wonder then that her enemies should be scattered in confusion, and the nations should give place unto her!

[TO BE CONCLUDED.]

LITERATURE.

UNIVERSALITY OF THE FRENCH LANGUAGE.

We find in the March number of the *Revue Encyclopedique*, an abstract of a discourse on this subject, which assigns with tolerable accuracy the causes which have hitherto made the French language so extensively spoken, and so exclusively important to the traveller. The Berlin Academy, in 1783 proposed the three following as prize questions—'What has made the French the universal language?' 'Why does it merit this distinction?' 'Is it possible that it will continue to maintain it?' The prize was awarded between a popular French writer and a learned German named Schueb, whose profound researches do not seem to have suited either the mind or the vanity of the French. The work of which this article is an abstract, is by M. Allon, who treats the subjects in the order of the first and third questions. The causes of the prevalence of the language he considers, first historically, and next philosophically. He sketches the progress of the language up to the eleventh century and the epoch of the *troubadours* in the South, and *trouverses* in the North of France. These wandering minstrels doubtless had a memorable influence in extending the Provincial dialects over all Europe, and subsequently into Asia; while their stationary schools, to which strangers were attracted, contributed alike to inspire them with a love for the language of song, and to give it a fixed form and consistent arrangement. In the thirteenth century the two principal dialects merged into one; or rather one prevailed, and became that of the Court.—Meantime the Crusades had spread the use of them far and wide; and then came the romances of Chivalry, which are alleged to have been originally written in what was then the language of France. The French conquest in England, Sicily, and the Greek empire, the encouragement of printing in France, and the brilliant reign of Francis I. are next enumerated; and it is mentioned that Charles V. paid distinguished homage to the language, when he employed it in announcing his abdication of the imperial throne in favour of his son. From the period of the reign of Henry IVth, begins the series of eminent French writers; Malherbe and Pascal being most distinguished among the earliest of those who formed this language and made it classical. It is customary to designate all these writers collectively, as belonging to the age of Louis XIV. Similar licenses are taken in speaking of any number of literary men who flourished within fifty years of each other, in the history of English literature. The revocation of the edict of Nantz sent an army of exiles abroad, to circulate their mother tongue. The age which followed was one, in which science and learning were cultivated over all Europe, as they had never been before; and on the continent, the French writers, or the English through the vehicle of the French language, had universal circulation. From the breaking out of the American War, to the downfall of Buonaparte,

the history of the French nation is too well known to need any reference even to its leading features. Their arms were carried into every quarter of the world; and their diplomatic relations to every nation, that was approachable in that character.

The philosophical reasons for the general use of the French language assigned by Mr. Allon, are—its perspicuity; the simplicity of its grammatical construction; the circumstance, that the great body of its words are derived from the language which prevailed in Europe before it was overrun by the barbarians; its plainness, which renders it so peculiarly fit for conversation; its polite characteristics, and adaptation to gallantry which make it the favourite of the women all over the world; the geographical position of France and the affable and courteous demeanor of its inhabitants; and the circumstances which have prevented the language of any other nation,—of Italy, Germany, England or Spain from obtaining an equal circulation, as the current coin of thought.

Truly, this last is a sweeping reason, and after all Mr. Allon's philosophy is the same as Mr. Owen's. The solution of the first question may however be fairly found among the several causes he has assigned; though he, or the analyst of his dissertation, has not made these which have been most effectual, most prominent. We shall not at present accompany him in his speculations on the probable duration of the ascendancy of the French tongue as to universal use.—We should like exceedingly to see a well written paper on the comparative extent to which the English and French languages are spoken over the world at present. It is a subject requiring industry rather than talent. Deliver us from philosophy, upon such matters of fact!



NEW PUBLICATIONS.

The last number of the Foreign Quarterly contains a list of 313 different works published on the Continent from January to March inclusive.

Baron Humboldt writes to his Paris publisher, under date of March 22d, that he expects to return from the Ural Mountains and the banks of the Irtysh in autumn, and will then resume his labors in his *Relation Historique*. From this it is inferred that his proposed journey to the Caucasus has been for the present relinquished.

Two republications are announced at Paris of the Sermons of Saurin: the first complete in eight volumes—the second a selection in four.

A new periodical, entitled *Revue Britanique Religieuse*, consisting of selections from the best Religious Journal in Great Britain and in the United States, is announced to appear quarterly at Paris and Geneva.

A humorous poem in Latin distichs, to satirize the mania of smoking, has just been published at Vienna, entitled *Amor Capnophilus Carmen nuper repertum, nunc commentario philologico, aesthetico, ethico, illustratum editit Palladius Philochorus*.

Two volumes of Poems by His Majesty the King of Bavaria have recently appeared the profits of which are to be devoted to charitable purposes.

The University of Munich, in the third year of its existence, is attended by 1700 students.

Mr. Gustavus Haenel, who has been travelling for seven years in the South of Germany, Italy, Switzerland, France, Spain, Portugal, Great Britain and the Netherlands, is about to publish a collection of inedited catalogues of MSS preserved in more than one hundred libraries, with a description of the Libraries visited, historical notices, &c.

A selection of the works of Luther, adapted to the present times, has just appeared, in 10 volumes, 8 vo.

A new edition of the works of Melancthon is about to be published by Bretschneider, and will include nearly 600 inedited letters and papers of that distinguished Reformer.

The King of Prussia has granted the sum of \$14,000 to the Observatory of Berlin, \$8500 of which are for the purchase of a fourteen feet Telescope, now at Munich, \$4500 for a Meridian Circle, and \$600 for a Chronometer.

The Emperor of Russia has established a Central Institution at St. Petersburg for the education of Teachers; and has appropriated 207,400 rubles per annum for its support.