

THE CROSS.



NEW

SERIES.

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No. 10.

God forbid that I should glory, save in the Cross of our Lord Jesus Christ; by whom the world is Crucified to me, and I to the world.—St. Paul, Gal. vi. 14.

HALIFAX, MARCH 6, 1847.

CALENDAR.

- MARCH 7—Sunday—III of Lent.
 8—Monday—St. John of God, Conf.
 9—Tuesday—St. Frances Roman Widow.
 10—Wednesday—The Forty Martyrs.
 11—Thursday—St. Agatha, P. and C.
 12—Friday—Five Sacred Wounds of our Lord J. C.
 13—Saturday—St. Hyginus P. and M.

THE "CAKE AND WAFER" HISTORIAN OF THE GUARDIAN.

We promised last week to give a testimony or two from Protestant writers, on the real nature, and character of monastic Institutions, from which it will be seen that the "Presbyterian" Correspondent of the Guardian, this great literary "man in the iron mask" and bottle-holder in ordinary, to the "aggravated criminal," is not so profound an historian as he imagined. We warrant him that there is much more than he dreams of, to be said on the other side of the question, and in behalf of those noble Institutions to which the world is so much indebted.

Dr. Tanner Bishop of St. Asaph in the time of George II, and who is repeatedly quoted by Hume in his mendacious history of England, published a Book entitled: "An account of all the abbies, priories, and friaries, formerly existing in England and Wales" from which we take the following remarkable passage:

"In every great abbey there was a large room called the Scriptorium, where several writers made it their whole business to transcribe books for the use of the library. They sometimes, indeed, wrote the leiger books of the house, and the missals, and other books used in divine service, but they were generally upon other works, viz: the Fathers, Classics, Histories, &c., &c.—John Whettnamstead, abbat of St. Alban's, caused above eighty books to be transcribed (there was then no printing) during his abbacy. Fifty-eight were transcribed by the care of one Abbat at Glastonbury and so zealous were the Monks in general for this work, that they often got lands given and churches appropriated for the carrying of it on. In all the greater abbies, there

were also persons appointed to take notice of the principal occurrences of the kingdom, and at the end of every year to digest them into annals. In these records they particularly preserved the memoirs of their founders and benefactors, the years and days of their births and deaths, their marriages, children and successors; so that recourse was sometimes had to them for proving persons ages and genealogies; though it is to be feared that some of those pedigrees were drawn up from tradition only; and that in most of their accounts they were favourable to their friends, and severe upon their enemies. The constitutions of the Clergy in their national and provincial synods, and (after the Conquest) even Acts of Parliament, were sent to the abbies to be recorded; which leads me to mention the use and advantage of these religious houses. For FIRST, the choicest records and treasures in the kingdom were preserved in them.—An exemplification of the Charter of liberties granted by King Henry I. (Magna Charta) was sent to every county to be preserved. Charters and Inquisitions relating to the county of Cornwall were deposited in the Priory of Bodmin; a great many rolls were lodged in the Abbey of Leicester and Priory of Kenilworth, till taken from thence by King Henry III. King Edward I. sent to the religious houses to search for his title to the kingdom of Scotland, in their leigers and chronicles, as the most authentic records for proof of his right to that Crown. When his sovereignty was acknowledged in Scotland, he sent letters to have it inserted in the chronicles of the Abbey of Wincheomb, and the Priory of Norwich, and probably of many other such-like places. And when he decided the controversy relating to the crown of Scotland, between Robert Brus and John Balliol, he wrote to the Dean and Chapter of St. Paul's London, requiring them to enter into their chronicles the exemplification therewith sent of that decision. The learned M. Selden hath his great evidences for the dominion of the narrow seas belong to the King of Great Britain from monastic record. The evidences and money of private families were oft times sent to these houses to be preserved. The seals of Noblemen were deposited there upon their deaths. And even the King's money was sometimes lodged in them. SECONDLY, they were schools of learning and education; for every convent had one person or more appointed for this purpose; and all the neighbours, that desired it, might have their children taught grammar and church music without any expense to them. In the Nunneries also young women were taught to work and to read English, and sometimes Latin also. So that not only the lower rank of people who could not pay for their learning, but most of the noblemen's and gentlemen's daughters were educated in those places. THIRDLY, all the monasteries were