

TALK AT THE SYNOD.

Perhaps it is irreverent to allude to any of the deliberations of the venerable Synod as "talk;" but then we do not think for a moment of characterizing them by such a word. Our aim is rather to indicate that undercurrent of thought and feeling which one who listens to the discussions or who mingles with the members can catch, but which can never be stereotyped in the minutes nor felt outside of the body within which it circulates. A wise man will form an opinion of the mind of the court not so much from the formal deliverances which it gravely gives forth, as from the tones of the speakers, the manner in which particular sentiments are caught up and re-echoed, the off-hand remarks made by members to those sitting near them, and in fact all that by-play which goes on during the regular discussion of a subject. Let a stranger enter on the second day of the Synod's sitting, for example, and after remaining two or three hours what impressions will he carry away of the talk about Union with the United Presbyterian Church of the Lower Provinces, supposing that he goes away without hearing the conclusion to which the Court comes on the subject? We think that his opinion will be very different from that entertained by those amiable persons who are predicting a general union as the probable New Year's-day gift of 1866. Not because he heard any member taking up an egotistical High Church position; but because of the general dissatisfaction expressed with the whole conduct of the United body as far as it related to the Kirk. The broad Dissenting type of the whole body, its hostility to our Mother Church, the assimilation of its congregational action to that of a congeries of political societies, the general tone of its organs, its offensive and wanton aggressiveness, the impudent and grotesque slanders of all that and of all whom we venerate not only circulated privately, but to the world by public speeches and letters, these and other tokens betokening a similar spirit had evidently deeply galled every member of Synod. And it was noticed that while many ministers of the other body had come out to Nova Scotia for the express purpose of dividing Presbyterianism, ours on the contrary had come ardently longing for a union, which now they saw no hopes of realizing on account of the intolerant spirit manifested towards them. It would scarcely be the opinion of an "able editor" that our *ministers* were now eager for union had he heard all this "talk." He would have learned that they preferred the spirit to the form, sincerity to pretence, and deeds to words. He would have heard that our ministers thought it somewhat inconsistent for a Church to be offering Union, while it was not agreed on the point of whether we were or were not a faithful Church of Christ. It seemed as if it were bent on securing to itself the advantages and gaining the credit

both of peace and of war; its representatives in one place turning the laugh against the fossilized incapables who would desire to root Scottish dissension in Nova Scotia soil, and in another place not allowing our ministers to enter their pulpits, or refusing to admit a member of our church to their communion table, or openly defaming our ministers and church. All these things it was declared must be changed before the subject of union could again be broached. The speaking on the subject was excellent. Mr. Herdman spoke with much warmth and point; and the remarks of the Honble. Mr. Holmes had a sincerity and moral earnestness that told with great effect; but the members present seemed to praise Mr. Sinclair's speech most for precision of language, and lucidity and breadth of thought. It is a great pity that there was no reporter present on this occasion, and indeed on all the days during which the Synod continued its sittings. Our church is not blessed as the other religious bodies in the Province are—with a weekly newspaper to give its proceedings in full and so advocate its interests. Our only organ is the *Record*, and the best minutes in the world give but a very bald and meagre account of what is done at the meeting of Synod. Let us hope that a remedy may be secured for this next year by the appointment of some one to draw up a fuller report of what is said upon special subjects than that contained in the minutes. I might however refer to the "talk" in and around the venerable court on other matters. Thus, for example, it was amusing to hear that this year as formerly, the Island Presbytery had excited attention for some irregularity of proceeding and one or two other vagaries. Then as to the circulation of the *Record*, while some congregations, such as New Glasgow and St. John's, were doing excellently, others were much blamed for culpable indifference on the subject. In Halifax Presbytery especially, the smallness of the number taken excited much astonishment. No *Records* taken in Truro, none in Musquodoboit, none in Mr. Martin's stations around Halifax! a state of matters surely that indicates little zeal in those quarters. And as to Pictou Presbytery, it was noticed as rather singular that only £2 10s. had been collected within its bounds last year for the Synod Fund, though members of the Presbytery had claims against the Fund of ten times the amount.

A PEEP AT RUSSIA AND THE SHORES OF THE BALTIC.

I confess to the disappointment which I have always experienced when comparing any place I have ever visited, with the best descriptions of it which I had previously read. The pictures drawn by the writers, or perhaps these as misrepresented by the mind of the reader, have never at once adjusted