

and superstitious priesthood is not so bad as subjection to the flesh and the devil. Almost any kind of religion is to be preferred to no religion at all ; and the special danger of Protestant communities is, that an element should spring up within them that has not even the semblance of any religion whatever.

THE UNSETTLED STATE OF THE WORLD.

The present outlook is not particularly assuring as to the continued peace of the world. The relations of the United States with Spain are anything but cordial ; and it is not impossible that Cuba may before many months become the scene of a sanguinary struggle. The state of things on the Mexican border is such, it is said, as would make a war with that country on the part of the United States, popular in Texas. And, moreover, it is affirmed by some who claim to be well informed that the exigencies of the Republican party requires a war, this being the only way in which it can effectually regain its prestige, confirm its hold on public confidence, and renew its lease of power. In Europe, France is ill at ease ; like a chained tiger, peaceable from necessity rather than choice ; nursing its wrath and keeping it warm against the day of vengeance which it is waiting for with ill-disguised impatience. Prussia, between the Papacy on the one hand and France on the other, is between two fires. Besides, the position which she has already acquired and the aggressive policy which she has adopted makes her the object of envy and suspicion among her neighbours. Her diplomatic wisdom, and the strength of her right arm, constitute her only security. Russia seems to be pushing forward with more than her wonted energy, preparation for the movement of large masses of troops at an early day. The emissaries of the papacy are plotting everywhere for the humiliation of Italy, and the restoration of the states of the Church. Spain, in addition to her own civil war which is still raging, and the bloody struggle which is going on in Cuba, is talking in a way that sounds very much like war with the United States. In Africa the Ashantees are behaving themselves so badly that there seems to be some danger of England having to administer some further chastisement to them. If wars and fightings come from the lusts which war in our members, human nature, with all its boasted advancement, appears to be at present just about what it has been in past ages—as lusting and turbulent as ever. It is only a merciful Providence that prevents the nations from devouring one another. But He who has given the sea its bounds that it cannot pass, has set limits to the rage of man. The same voice which stilled the waves of the sea subdueth the tumult of the people. It is pleasant, too, to recollect that amid all the changes and apparent confusion of human history the purposes of God are always going forward, and that whether the affairs of the world wear an encouraging or a threatening aspect, every event that transpires is contributory to the ultimate and universal triumph of the Redeemer's kingdom in the earth.

THE MILD WINTER.

The beautifully poetic sentiment, that "Providence tempers the breeze to the shorn lamb," has been strikingly illustrated by the mildness of the present winter. It has been an invaluable boon to many thousands of poor people. It has been a long time since Canadian farmers were ploughing before on New Year's day ; and longer still since a steamboat excursion took place on that day on Lake Ontario. But both of these things took place