

THE "ROCK" IN A BAD MESS.

OUR evangelical contemporary is always welcome; it presents its case usually with Christian temper, skill undoubted, and zeal that is seldom without knowledge or good taste. But in its issue of the 4th inst it fell into a bad mess. Two articles appeared in succession which are mutually destructive. In the first it expressed an earnest protest against the efforts being made to bring the Old Catholics into open communion with the Church of England; not we judge so much because the *Rock* regards this union as objectionable in itself, but because the labor it involves would be more profitably spent in an endeavour to reconcile the Nonconformists, whom it regards, as the manner of its party is, with so much affectionate concern and with so much wasted sympathy.

As the DOMINION CHURCHMAN is not a party journal our horizon is a far wider one than the *Rock* observes. We cannot see why the Church should not hold out *one hand* to the Old Catholics and *the other* to the separatists in England. That, however, is only an "aside."

In the next article the *Rock* discusses Mr. Spurgeon's excision of himself from the Nonconformists, and in very warm and proper terms applauds the Baptist preacher for coming out from open communion with his brother dissenters. The *Rock* truly says "Mr. Spurgeon's secession must command the hearty and sympathetic approval of all who hold loyalty to Christ before ecclesiastical associations." But the *Rock* on the same page censures Churchmen for holding that loyalty to Christ necessarily keeps them ecclesiastically apart from those who are not loyal to Him! The *Rock* compares those who are now seeking to bring about communion between the Church of England and the Old Catholics, to a man who in order to lengthen his blanket cuts off a piece at the top to fasten it at the other end. The simile is badly lame of both legs. It is based on the hypothesis that such union would alienate dissenters. Now, in the first place, the *pieces* ought to be added, *i.e.*, the Old Catholics, are not now in communion with us, the addition would therefore be of *fresh material*. In the next place, the piece likely, according to the *Rock*, to be cut off, *i.e.*, the sects of dissenters, are not now part of the blanket in their own opinion, as they cut themselves off from the Church years ago. The true question is, Is it the duty of the Church of England to seek union with the Old Catholics? If so, then what dissenters think is utterly beside the question. Those who have left the family circle have no right to guide the household policy. The son who objected to the Prodigal being welcomed home again had been faithful to his father, and, at any rate, was entitled to a voice in the domestic affairs. But here is a case, as the *Rock* puts it, of a son, the dissenter, who in a fit of ill-temper leaves his home, the Church, stays away without any rational cause of quarrel, yet is going to raise a row because he objects to one,—the Old

Catholic—marrying into the family whom *he* does not like! Could the impertinence of arrogance go further than such conduct as the *Rock* attributes to the dissenters? Let these prodigals return to the hearth they deserted so wantonly; they will be warmly welcomed and their counsels heard with respect. But while they remain in the wilderness of schism the Church must decline to seek, or when proffered, must ignore their advice touching her policy.

Surely, surely, if Mr. Spurgeon has taken what the *Rock* calls "a noble stand," by parting company with all other dissenters because of their false teaching, it cannot be otherwise than also "a noble stand" which Churchmen take when they, with Mr. Spurgeon, also avoid the company of dissenters, who, according to the *Rock*, are walking so disorderly as to justify Mr. Spurgeon quitting their society? Does the *Rock* wish the Church clergy and laity to be less careful as to their "ecclesiastical associations" than a Baptist preacher is?

Our excellent contemporary should read all his own articles at one sitting, such palpable inconsistencies as we have pointed out would then be seen in time to be avoided! We hope to see, not merely "Old Catholics," but new ones, ultramontanes and all, with the whole body of *other dissenters*, gradually brought into open communion within the fold of One Catholic and Apostolic Church.

THE CHURCH IN WALES.

UNDER cover of an address to the St. David's Society, a Mr. R. Lewis, a few days ago, made an attack on the Church in Wales. He has also written to the press stating that "the Church secures only one-third of the people in Wales and yet taxes them for its support." Mr. Lewis is, we hear, a public schoolteacher. How far one holding a public trust as a paid teacher of the State is justified in slandering the Church we need not remark upon. But we say with all the emphasis we can command that for a *teacher* to be so crassly ignorant as to call tithes a *tax* is a scandal. We may well want an enormous increase in the accommodation for young criminals if they learn no better morality at school than that the Church taxes those who owe her tithe! We give a short report of a recent meeting in Wales on this question, which is interesting in this connection.

Mr. Stanley Leighton, M.P., moved the next resolution, namely:—

"That this meeting of Churchmen, being satisfied that there is a complete ecclesiastical, constitutional, legal, and historical identity between the Church in Wales and the rest of the Church in England, pledges itself to resist to the utmost any attempt to disestablish the Church in Wales."

Mr. Leighton said the opposition was strong enough in organisation, discipline and resolution; but the big battalions were on the side of the Church. A majority was, however, sometimes overcome by a minority if it failed to show equal courage and resolution, but so far there was hardly a single platform where the

Liberationist lecturers had not been confronted, and the table had not been turned upon them. First they appealed to numbers. "Very well," was the reply, "let us have a census." "Oh dear no," they said, "not at all. Such a thing would be intolerable." Then they said, "We will count the people ourselves." And what has been the result? Why, that there were in North Wales five Churchmen for every three Calvinistic Methodists, three Churchmen for every Independent; three for every Wesleyan and five for every Baptist—in fact, they found that the Church was the largest denomination. Then they arranged to have an absolutely secret census—as to which the hon. gentleman read the circular of Messrs. Gee, of the *Baner*, which we printed last week; adding that it was a maxim of the law that secrecy was generally an indication of fraud. Then they said that they did not like the Church because it was endowed; whereupon it was shown that Dissenting ministers in Wales had been paid out of the taxes for one hundred and thirty years—a fact which greatly astonished the Welsh audiences. Then they said that Nonconformity was the natural religion of Wales; but it was shown that it was established by an Act of Parliament passed under Cromwell for the propagation of the Gospel, and was forced upon them by the Ironsides of that alien ruler. It was a very curious thing that the present advocates of the disestablishment in Wales were also "aliens," like Mr. Samuel Smith, of Liverpool, or Mr. Stuart Rendel, of London. A word as to the Swansea episode. An eminent Scotch politician, who represented a Scotch constituency, was invited there in order that he might pronounce sentence of death upon the Church. There was a great gathering and this eminent politician said the Church of Wales was coeval with the introduction of Christianity into the island, and that it was the historical National Church of the United Kingdom. The people of Swansea were astonished, as well they might be; for they had sent for Balaam to curse the Welsh Church, and he had blessed it altogether. The fact was he had learned that, as Lord Balfour had told them, there were seven thousand of his own constituents ready to turn him out if he said a word about disestablishment. He (Mr. Leighton) was told that the Liberationists used words which, spoken of Mr. Gladstone, he should consider words of impiety. They actually said he was "hedging;" and hedging, he believed, meant backing two horses to win the same race.

Dean James (St. Asaph), in seconding the motion, said that great allowance ought to be made for the Welsh farmers, to whom, while acutely feeling the pinch of the depression, there came a suggestion not only that they would be justified in demanding a large reduction of their tithe, but that it was a religious duty to insist upon it, or to refuse to pay tithe at all. The Welsh farmers were but men, and it was not surprising that they should have yielded to the temptation; but all honor to those (and they were the large majority) who had resisted it and paid their debts like men