

DIocese of GLOUCESTER AND BRISTOL.

VISITATION OF THE DIOCESE.—The Visitation was held at our Cathedral on Thursday last, by Dr. Phillimore, the Chancellor of the Diocese. We much regret that owing to ill-health, our respected Diocesan, who had decided on Wednesday to be present, was strictly forbidden to encounter the fatigues and excitement which such a meeting would naturally produce. It was not till the end of last week that his Lordship was enabled to fix the days for Visiting; though the notice was thus brief we never recollect so few of the Clergy absent. At the conclusion of Mr. Canon Harvey's able Sermon, Mr. Barrow announced from the altar the deep regret the Lord Bishop felt at being compelled to relinquish the intention he had formed of meeting his Reverend brethren; he had, however, requested his secretary to place in the hands of each of his Clergy a printed copy of his Charge, which the present state of his health prevented him delivering in person. The names of the Clergy were then called over by the Deputy-Registrar, after which the Chancellor dismissed them with a brief speech, and retired to the Chapter-room, where he received the presentations of the Churchwardens, none of which were of any interest excepting that from Stapleton parishes, which led to a scene.

We subjoin extracts from his Lordship's Charge, upon the principal topics touched upon by his Lordship:—

SYNOICAL ACTION.—The earliest attempt at a movement in favour of the revival of the legislative action of Convocation which I can remember, took place twenty-five years ago, when at the meeting of a new Convocation I had the honour to be chosen Prolocutor of the Lower House. By those who at that time mooted the question, its merits were but little considered or understood; and the proposal of an address to the Crown, soliciting leave to proceed to dispatch of business, was opposed by the prevalent feeling of the members then assembled. I took the occasion of the speech addressed by the Prolocutor to the Synod, to mention some of the difficulties and inconveniences which lay in the way of the suggested renewal at a time when no particular advantages could be expected, and no special call existed for such a measure. A quarter of a century has greatly affected the position of things and of persons: the constitution of Parliament has been changed by the introduction of a large body of religionists, who act together in the closest party alliance for purposes hostile to the Church. There is, now, therefore, a peculiar objection to the discussion of Ecclesiastical subjects in such an assembly; while there have arisen considerations making it desirable for the Church to have an authorized settlement of certain material points, which must otherwise remain in doubt and dispute. On the first view of this subject, it would seem impossible to deny that our Church requires, like every other association, whether civil or religious, the operation of some council, which, possessing the confidence of its members, may be invested with power to make rules for its government, and to alter them so as to meet the continual innovations introduced by time into human establishments. The precedent of such a council dates from the first Synod held in Jerusalem by the Holy Apostles, and has been followed in every age and in every form of the Christian Church. And as the laws to which we are subject have all originated in Synodical assemblies, so there is a sort of necessity that it should be so in the future. Such a power was in operation in this country till one hundred and thirty-seven years ago; since which time, though the forms have been scrupulously preserved, the efficiency of our provincial Synods has been suppressed by the Royal authority. As the case which induced this interruption in the meeting of the Convocation of Canterbury was of a peculiar and temporary nature, it appears unreasonable that the same interdiction should be continued long after the motive has ceased to operate. But those who would form a just opinion of the case, must not be content with a superficial view, but consider what was the real condition of that council, of which the Church has been so long deprived. In the first place, the two Provincial Synods possessed independent and co-ordinate authority. Differences and dissensions between them were indeed avoided by the general acquiescence of the Synod of York in the resolutions of the larger province; yet the contingency of discordant resolutions was always possible, and threatened no less an evil than schism in the Church.

Again, the constitution of the Convocation of Canterbury, which alone was regarded as the Ecclesiastical senate, never was well defined; and the privileges of the Lower House, as distinct from the Upper or Episcopal, were a subject of continued controversy. Indeed the rights of Convocation have proved a topic of eager contention, engaging some of the most learned and acute of our Ecclesiastical antiquaries: but the labours of Wake, Kennet, Atterbury, and other combatants had but little practical effect beyond keeping alive the spirit of party division. From the time that the Clergy gave up the ancient constitutional right of being taxed for the necessities of the State by their own representatives in Convocation, (in the exercise of which privilege they had invariably shown themselves more liberal than the Parliament), the weight and importance of the Synod, in a political point of view, had passed away. The great change took place in the year 1664; and the subsequent history of the Convocation, when permitted to sit and debate, contains little more than a record of the struggles between the High and Low Church parties, and contests on points of constitutional privileges between the two Houses. A motion for censuring books or passages in books bearing upon some controverted doctrines, or offering scope for party differences, was the usual ground on which those contests were carried on: and in the mean time the press interested all the community in the disputes of Convocation. The last of these occasions happened to engage an extraordinary quantity of attention, and to involve the public mind in great and continued agitation; and the bearing of the subject being connected with political feelings, the Ministry of the day, to which the majority of the Lower House were opposed, determined to suspend the operations of the body by a prorogation. There is no reason to suppose that more was intended by the Statesmen who recommended that measure, than the termination of a proceeding which was found inconvenient by the Government, or that the interruption of Synodical proceedings was meant to be more than temporary: indeed there had been a recent precedent for ten years. But whatever may have been the cause or the concurrence of causes, the fact is, that from 1717 to the present day, the Convocation has never been suffered to exercise its legislative power: in the mean time its election, its summons, its meeting, and the Address to the Throne, have been continued with

scrupulous regularity: but the Royal permission, without which they can neither debate nor decree any thing, has been uniformly withheld.

Several events of late years, and particularly the disposition which has manifested itself to examine with minuteness the *Lex Scripta* of our Rubrics and Canons, have produced a prevailing opinion that without the intervention of the legislative power of the Church, exercised in its legitimate Synod, neither our present difficulties can be removed, nor due provision be made for godly quietness and peace in future. It is true that an assemblage of the English Bishops has frequently been consulted by the Primate upon questions which might from time to time call for the interposition of authority: but independently of the difficulty of obtaining the unanimous assent of the Bench upon matters which admit shades of difference in sentiment, the judgment of that body, having no legal authority, can never carry with it the weight, or possess the efficacy belonging to the recorded decrees of a council sanctioned by the supreme power of the State. These, and many other considerations, which will readily occur, have brought many, even among persons generally averse from experiments, to an inevitable conclusion that the time has arrived which calls for the revived energies of a Convocation. Neither is this opinion confined to those of one party, nor do I believe it to have any bearing upon points, whether religious or political, where differences of opinion exist. In wishing the restoration of a deliberative body possessing the power of legislating in the Church, no reflecting mind can be insensible to the danger, or fail to perceive the mischievous purposes to which such an assembly might be turned. It is possible, however, that greater danger may be threatened from the absence of such power. By no authority less than that which enacted our Rubrics and our Canons can they be revised or improved, be the demand for such alteration ever so cogent. The consequence of leaving matters as they are, for the present, continued agitation, and schism or disruption in prospect. The idea of recalling into activity an assembly known only to historical or antiquarian research, may remind people of the awful experiment which took place in France, of summoning the long neglected *States General*, a body which, instead of reforming abuses, overthrew not only the Government, but the whole legal, moral, and religious fabric of society, and subjected the country to alternate anarchy and tyranny, accompanied by horrors of which history has scarcely an example. But except in the intervention of a long interval, the two cases will admit of no parallel. In one, the proceedings were from first to last of a godless character; in the other, the views of all parties concur in the promotion of God's glory, and the pacification and extension of Christ's kingdom upon earth.

Let me, however, earnestly impress upon you, that no one ought to desire the restoration of an acting Convocation, without such a reform in its constitution as the altered circumstances of the country and of the Church demand. In the early period of our history, to which the origin of these Synods is to be traced, from difficulty of travelling and the want of suitable qualifications and suitable means amongst the generality of the parochial Clergy, two Proctors from each Diocese were thought sufficient to represent that body; a number which has continued unaltered, while the Cathedral dignitaries are at least a hundred. I apprehend that no arrangement of this matter will be satisfactory to the Church or the community, except such as will give a fair representation to the Clergy of all the Dioceses in England, Wales, and Ireland, to be assembled not in separate Synods, but in the same House of Convocation. These remarks I have thought fit to make upon a subject which I have never before mentioned to my Clergy, but which the current of events must inevitably force upon their consideration. Having myself for a long time entertained serious doubts as to the policy of a restored Synodical action, and having convinced myself by reflection that the peculiar difficulties under which we now labour cannot be otherwise removed, and that a recurrence to the opinion of the Church, speaking in its authorized and legitimate character, is becoming expedient, I have felt it right to declare so much to my Clergy; that in case they should feel disposed to solicit the gracious permission of the Sovereign, without which no Convocation can act or even deliberate, they may know that they will be acting with the approbation and concurrence of their Diocesan."

PRESENT CONDITION OF THE CLERGY.—There are two dispositions of mind equally to be avoided by those who wish for human improvement—a complacent satisfaction with the existing order of things (a feeling which has been expressly termed *sufficiency*), and a desponding view of the efforts made to attain excellence, arising from a sense of difficulties yet to be surmounted in striving after perfection. The one has a tendency to represent exertion as unnecessary, the other as hopeless. To the latter of these two extremes the *Statement*, however unintentionally, would conduct us. When I consider the amelioration which has taken place in all the particulars to which the efforts of the Clergy are applicable during the time of my own Episcopate, now in its twenty-second year, I find abundant reason for thankfulness to the Great Head of the Church, and a convincing proof that His favour and protection has not deserted His household. During these years a large number of new Churches has been erected for the accommodation of the increased population both in our town and country parishes; and this blessed work continues to advance with undiminished spirit; while in the mean time, many of the old Churches in all parts of the Diocese have been rebuilt, and a still greater number have been architecturally restored, and by means of improved interior fittings, rendered capable of containing larger congregations. Such operations, carried on by different congregations, the zeal and emulation which a holy cause inspires, are attended with the additional benefit of opening the Churches to all classes of the community; and removing by amicable arrangement that invidious and exclusive claim to seats which has proved in its consequences so severe an evil to our national establishments, and such a fruitful source of dissent. These works cannot of course be effected without great pecuniary sacrifices on the part of the laity: and the unexampled cheerfulness with which we see them made by parishes and individuals, seem conclusively to refute the opinion that the Church has lost its hold on the affections of the people. Again, when reference is made to the character, the demeanour, and the exertions of our parochial Clergy, I do fearlessly maintain that within the time mentioned a great and signal improvement has taken place; not only is much more duty performed by each Clergyman, but the Services have gained in devotional effect. It is mainly through the agency of the parochial ministry that the number of children receiving Church Education exceeds in a manifold degree what it was at the commencement of the period. Far be it from me to deny that much more remains to be achieved; but surely there is ground for encourage-

ment, and for thankfulness to Him who disposes the hearts of men to render Him true and laudable service. In particular, the zeal and devotion shown by the younger Clergy in the exercise of their sacred functions, and the general absence of ungodly levity, inspire me with earnest hope for the future fortunes of the Church. At the same time, it is impossible to indulge sentiments of unmixed satisfaction; like the memorialists I deplore the too frequent instances of preferments being regarded and treated like patrimonial property; and I sympathize with them in condemning the inexcusable laxity and facility with which testimonials are sometimes subscribed by the Beneficed Clergy. That subject I have heretofore mentioned to you, and I now recur to it with the earnestness of one who speaks of an abuse of which he has had long and painful experience: for of all the Diocesan matters which have caused me uneasiness, and occupied time which would have been more usefully and agreeably employed in the performance of other duties, far the greater part would never have occurred, had proper inquiry been made into the character and conduct of individuals by those who subscribed testimonials in their favour."

SYSTEMATIC AND DISTINCTIVE EDUCATION OF THE CLERGY.—I sympathize with the *Statement* in regretting the want of a systematic and distinctive education for the Clergy; and one of the objects which has never been absent from my mind has been an institution for that purpose, in which candidates for holy orders might pass a certain time between their degree and their ordination in such appropriate studies as would qualify them for the exercise of their ministry. But I have been deterred from the attempt by the vehement jealousies of the two parties prevailing amongst us, and the disinclination visible on both sides to support any establishment, the management of which was not likely to advance their own particular views. The promotion of any exclusive scheme of Clerical Education would tend to aggravate those divisions, the effect of which it is my earnest wish to heal. But the object will continue to be foremost in my thoughts; and if it should be the will of Providence to continue my life, and to restore the physical strength in which I am now deficient, I shall not despair of laying before you a proposal for its accomplishment."

SECESSIONS TO ROME.—The subject here touched upon is that which above all others, in my opinion, Churchmen must deplore, and at which our enemies may rejoice. It is true that the defections are few in reference to the whole number of the Clergy, and still fewer in comparison with that of the educated laity of the country; but even in point of number they are not inconsiderable; and whatever may be said of the individuals themselves, the fact remains, that the defection originated in one of the nurseries of our Church, causing a suspicion, apparently not ill-founded, that the springs were poisoned at their source. That the foremost person to rush into this as well as every other extravagance should be the young, the thoughtless, and the enthusiastic, was no more than might be expected. Some minds are so constituted that they must always be holders of extreme opinions; while the unfixed character of such temperaments keeps their views in continual fluctuation, and thereby accounts for the frequent phenomenon of a rapid movement from puritanical to popish predilections. But let us not flatter ourselves into security by such arguments. All the deserters are not such as we have described. There are some among them whose fall it is impossible to contemplate without the deepest grief, accompanied by surprise and humiliation. Let us pray the Great Father of the Church, whose favour towards this His household, has been so often and marvelously displayed, so to dispose the hearts of His faithful servants, that they may seriously consider what course may best conduce to the support and the enlargement of the true and unadulterated faith, and thereby turn this visitation to our lasting profit.—*Felix Farley's Journal.*

PROPOSED NEW BISHOPRIC.—A bill is to be introduced into parliament in the ensuing session, which has for its object the erection of the Channel Islands into a bishopric, and separating them from the diocese of Winchester. The reason assigned for this step in the preamble of the bill is, "that the Channel Islands are above a hundred miles from England, and consequently still further removed from Winchester, the seat of their bishop. Their population is of a character totally distinct from the rest of the diocese, and is rapidly increasing. Jersey contains 12 rectories and 20 churches in all, and 25 clergymen; Guernsey contains 10 rectories, fourteen churches in all, and 15 clergymen; the islands of Sark and Alderney contain each one clergyman and one church. The contemplated new bishopric is not to have a seat in the house of Lords, and his income is not to exceed £2,000 per annum."—*Morning Post.*

From our English Files.

WHAT IS TO BE DONE WITH IRELAND?—We do not profess to penetrate the mysteries of the Cabinet deliberations, but it is no secret that the Irish question has been, and is, the source of serious discussion. Lord John Russell has placed himself in that position which is so common to rash men, and so fatal to statesmen—a position in which to advance is impossible, and to retire unsafe, dishonourable, and self-destructive. He has not even the excuse which might be alleged by the feeble head of a disorganized party, that he had been forced into a path which his judgment condemned. He was not driven into the difficulty by any popular clamour—for he himself, by his Durham letter, evoked the clamour which has created the difficulty. It was in vain that Sir James Graham and Lord Aberdeen pointed out to him precisely the dilemma on the horns of which he is at this moment writhing. It is not often that political predictions are so literally and speedily fulfilled as in this instance. Over and over again, through the weary course of the debates on the Ecclesiastical Titles Bill, we urged upon the consideration of the Government, that when the question arose of applying it to Ireland, they would be reduced to the alternative of either throwing that country into violent civil commotion, or degrading the law itself by permitting, with impunity, its ostentatious violation. The time is come when the bitter alternative is forced on the attention of the Ministers, and the cannot long postpone their determination. If ever any man was pledged to a definite course of political action, Lord John Russell is pledged to prosecute the Irish Bishops under his own Act. He called forth the popular excitement against the Roman Catholics, and stimulated it by hopes of a strong repressive measure; he ultimately brought in a Bill which fell far short of the expectations he had aroused; and the question now arises, is he prepared to give effect to the *modicum* of coercion which he induced Parliament to sanction? Incredible as it may appear to any man of common sense, we believe that the Premier flattered himself with the fond anticipation

that the Irish Bishops would submit to be stripped of their titles without resistance. Such an expectation was, on the face of it, absurd. Even if we gave those prelates no credit for religious zeal, it is impossible not to see how great an accession of influence is open to such of them as may be willing to make themselves martyrs for £100. The Romish ecclesiastics would have forfeited for ever their reputation for astuteness, if they had missed so fair an opportunity of aggrandizing their power. When James II. was thwarted by the seven Bishops he exclaimed, "Those men are determined to be martyrs, and so they shall be." William III., on a similar occasion, said, "I see that these persons are bent on being prosecuted, and I am bent on disappointing them." Mr. Macaulay justly observes that these dissimilar answers account for the different fates of the two Monarchs. The Whig Lord J. Russell has chosen the policy of the Stuart Prince. We return to the question—Will Lord John Russell enforce his Bill against the Irish Bishops? Can it be that the early assembling of the Cabinet has anything to do with a determination of Lord Clarendon not to be the instrument of such a policy? We could readily believe this. Lord Clarendon has had to deal with one Irish rebellion, in which the vast power of the priesthood was ranged on the side of government and law. It would be no matter of wonder, were he to shrink from a contest in which such a body would be not only not with him, but would be at the head of the resistance. If the priests had sided with Smith O'Brien, the matter would not have ended in a cabbage garden. Whatever may be the theoretical view of the question, the religion of a country is, for all practical purposes, the religion of the majority of its people. Romanism is the religion of the majority of the Irish—a people peculiarly susceptible of ecclesiastical influence; and the grievance which the priests have to allege is so simple as to be intelligible to the most uneducated mind. "Whereas your bishops and pastors have been for many years in the enjoyment of certain titles of respect and honour, conferred by their ecclesiastical superior, the Pope, and assumed without question up to this time, they are now made subject to fine and imprisonment." O'Connell himself could not have prayed for a more hopeful cry. Twenty years back, the taunt of the Whigs against the Tories was, "What will you do with Ireland?" We now retort the question on Lord John Russell. We tell him publicly—what Lord Clarendon has probably told him in the Council—that his legislation of last Session has made the government of Ireland impossible. It is a grave evil, no doubt, that a law passed after long discussion, and affirmed by large majorities, should be openly and ostentatiously defied. But the dilemma is the work of the Ministers. Reason and toleration contended against the Bill which they forced upon the Legislature; it was protested against in every stage; and the perplexity which it has produced was abundantly foretold. The country is beginning to recover from the infatuation of last winter, and to understand

"How nations sink by darling schemes oppress,
When vengeance listens to the fool's request."
Lord John Russell has thought fit to play the part of both the impersonations in this drama. We leave him to settle with the country for the false position into which he has led it, by making the maintenance and the dignity of the law incompatible with the peace of the empire.—*Morning Chron.*

NITRATE OF SODA AS A TOP DRESSING FOR WHEAT.—Having read that some very good farmers in Norfolk make a practice of top dressing their wheat in spring with nitrate of soda, I determined once more to try this salt, which, as the older members of our society will remember, was once a very fashionable manure, but the use of which was discontinued by its advocates in consequence of its tendency to lay the corn and to produce mildew. These two serious faults, it now appears, may be corrected by mixing with the nitrate a moderate quantity of common sea-salt—which, when used in heavy doses, destroys the life of grass, and may therefore readily supposed to counteract the dangerous suddenness of vegetation that nitrate produces. Thus common salt may prevent mildew, and is known certainly, on some soils, to strengthen the straw. The nitrate was sown as directed, at the rate of one cwt. per acre, mixed with one cwt. of common salt; but this quantity was not given at once, being divided as enjoined into two doses, applied at a fortnight's interval, and in showery weather. It was so applied to a ten-acre piece of white wheat, a portion thereof being, however, passed over. The whole produce has been thrashed out already in order to test the effect; a portion was top-dressed, not with nitrate, but guano. The result is as follows:—

| | Bushels per acre. | Increase in Bushels. | Cost of Dressing. | Value of Increased Produce. |
|---------------------------------------|-------------------|----------------------|-------------------|-----------------------------|
| Undressed..... | 21 | .. | .. | .. |
| Guano, 2 cwt. ... | 24 | 3 | 20s. | 15s. 6d. |
| Nitrate, 1 cwt. and, Salt 1 cwt. | 25½ | 4½ | 17s. | 22s. 6d. |

The other trial was made on an eight acre piece of red wheat following barley. The wheat had begun to appear very blue and spindling, notwithstanding a good coat of dung given it in the autumn, to make up for cross cropping. The improvement was immediate and has stood the test of thrashing, for the account is as follows. Two acres were threshed, one on each side adjoining the half acre in the middle on which no nitrate of soda was sown:—

| | Bushels per Acre. | Increase in Bushels. | Cost of Dressing. | Value per Acre of Profit. Increased per Acre. |
|---------------|-------------------|----------------------|-------------------|---|
| Undressed.... | 10½ | .. | .. | .. |
| Nitrated..... | 27½ | 17s. | 42s. | 25s. |

The profit on the piece is certainly more than the value to rental of the land, which is a poor blowing sand. The theory of this action is now clearly established by Mr. Lawes's experiments, for nitrogen, whether as ammonia in guano or whether in a nitrate, is proved to be the food generally wanted by wheat.—*M. Pusey in Royal Agricultural Society's Journal.*
MANUFACTURE OF MOUNTAINS.—PROFESSOR GORINI.—This gentleman who is professor of natural history at the University of Lodi, made before a circle of private friends, two nights ago, a very remarkable experiment illustrative of his theory as to the formation of mountains. He melts some substances, known only to himself, in a vessel, and allows the liquid to cool. At first it presents an even surface, but a portion continues to ooze up from beneath, and gradually elevations are formed, until at length ranges, and chains of hills are formed, exactly corresponding in shape to those which are found on the earth. Even to the stratification the resemblance is complete, and M. Gorini can produce on a small scale the phenomena of volcanic noes and earthquakes. He contends, therefore, that the inequalities on the face of the globe are the result of certain materials first reduced by the application of heat to a liquid state and then allowed gradually to solidate. In another and more practically useful field