

ilities with other Powers. Her pre-eminent position among the nations of the earth renders her a necessary (though unwilling) party to every question which may arise between the nations of the Continent. There is no region of the earth where her sceptre is not felt, and no path of the ocean where her flag is not seen. A war cannot spring up on the Continent of Europe, in the issue of which she has not a direct or indirect interest. The dangerous ambition of a single despot in the old world has compelled her, within a recent period, to increase, to an unparalleled extent, her means of self-defence. A volunteer force, consisting of about all the manly strength of the nation, has, within a few years, sprung into existence. Fortifications of an improved kind, and on a grand scale, have been planned, and are in process of construction. The military force has been largely augmented, and the navy has been entirely re-modelled, and, at the same time, strengthened to gigantic proportions. All these heavy and expensive preparations have been made because the signs of the times portended a terrible struggle, the consequences of which, to the party unprepared, would be national disaster and disgrace, which centuries of prosperity might not wholly repair,—for there are evils which every free-born people ought to regard as greater than the evil of war itself. But if Great Britain has hitherto escaped being forced into hostilities in the *Old World*, it seemed more than likely, within a very recent date, that she would be drawn into a conflict in the *New*. The fratricidal contest which has been raging in America has inflamed to madness the passions of the combatants, and a single spark from that furnace seemed on the point of setting the whole world on fire. But, in the good providence of God, the danger was averted. The sword, half-drawn, was returned to the scabbard. Taking all these circumstances into consideration, have we not singular cause of thankfulness to the Sovereign Controller of all events for the blessed peace which at this moment reigns throughout all this land? We are accustomed to attribute much of our national security and prosperity to the prudent and enlightened policy of our rulers; and we have cause to thank God, that, in perilous times, He has planted round the throne men of patriotic virtue and consummate wisdom. Yet the wisest statesmen are the readiest to acknowledge, that, of the march of great events which decide the destiny of nations, the human mind can predict but little. Often we see from history, past and present, that the subtlest schemes of the most far-reaching intellects are confounded in a moment by the movement of an arm suddenly stretched from behind the cloud,

"And that should teach us
There's a Divinity that shapes our ends
Rough-hew them how we will."

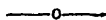
Let us trace our present peace and happi-

ness, then, to its true source, the overruling providence of God, and lift our hearts to Him in sincere gratitude for the singular favour He has hitherto bestowed upon us.

And here, again, as in the former case, we shall testify our thankfulness most effectually *by the whole course and tenor of our conduct*. To show that we are truly grateful for the blessings of peace, let us exhibit towards each other a peaceable and Christ-like disposition. If we profess to be the followers of Christ, let us not forget that His glorious and characteristic title is the "Prince of Peace." The burthen of that rapturous song which burst from the hosts of heaven over the starry plains of Bethlehem, proclaiming His advent, was, "Peace on earth; good-will towards men." And the parting accents in which He bade farewell to His chosen disciples when about to withdraw from them His bodily presence and ascend to the throne of His glory, were, "Peace I leave with you, my peace I give unto you."

There would be no war between nations if there were no war between individuals, and there would be no war between individuals if the spirit of Christ were in every heart. Pride, ambition, jealousy, avarice, and revenge, these are the bitter roots out of which has sprung all the strife that has severed the ties of family and friendship, and all the wars that have desolated the world.

May God impress these truths upon our hearts, and to His name be the praise! Amen



Sketches from Church History.

SCOTLAND.

St. Columba and the Old Celtic Bards.

In a former No. of the *Record*, we noticed the influence of the Druidical Priests as a formidable obstacle to the progress of the Truth, as taught by St. Columba and his associates. Yet there was another class of men—a distinct and powerful order—whose influence for good and evil was scarcely inferior even to that of the heathen priests, viz.: the old Celtic Bards. Humanly speaking, the success of the great Scottish Apostle would depend very much, indeed, upon the reception which awaited himself and his doctrine among this popular and powerful order of men. And we gladly notice this little episode in the life of our Christian Hero, because we think it involves an important principle which has too often been disregarded, and especially, since it proves that St. Columba was not only a zealous Christian, but a wise one.

In every age (at least, we suppose, from the days of Jubal), the power of music—vocal, as well as instrumental—has been felt and acknowledged. The poet, with his simple lay, may touch a chord in the human heart, which the eloquence of the orator and the wisdom