

opinions and worship. He had even gone the length of exciting the populace to tear down the images and ornaments in the Popish churches: an act which could only connect its authors with riot, and which the progress of knowledge would have soon effected without tumults or scandal. Luther, not unjustly alarmed at leaving his great and holy cause in the hands of human passion, abandoned his retreat at once, and for ever; and explaining his reasons in a letter to the Elector, hastened back to Wittemberg. He was received with general joy; but the various opinions and rising extravagances of his followers during his absence long perplexed him, and filled his manly spirit with apprehensions of unusual gloom. In his letter to Langus, an ecclesiastic of Erfurt, he speaks in this strain:—

"I am not permitted to come to you; nor is it lawful to tempt God, and unnecessarily to court dangers; since here at Wittemberg I must lay my account with a sufficient number: I who have been excommunicated by the Pope, put under the ban of the Empire, exposed to death on every side, protected by none but God."

A letter to the Elector contains almost the language of a man who contemplated martyrdom:—

"I am of opinion that the kindness or opposition of your Highness, and even the hatred of the whole world, ought to be only secondary considerations in the present peculiar circumstances of the church. Your Highness is master of my body and my destiny in this world; but Christ is the Lord of souls. The Gospel which I preach has its origin with God, and, by God's grace, neither persecution nor death shall wrest it from me. Neither cruelty nor terror shall extinguish this light."

The death of Leo X. had opened Rome to the intrigues of all the cabinets of Europe. But Charles was on the spot—his dominions surrounded the Roman States; he was lord of the opulence of the New World—and he prevailed. The tiara was laid on the brow of his former tutor, Adrian, a monk of Utrecht, created a Cardinal so late as 1517, and one of the extraordinary number of thirty-one, whom the late Pope, alike the most indolent of men, and the most headlong and profligate of politicians, had raised to the hat in one day.

Adrian possessed such learning, and such Christianity, as were to be found in convents; and, with equal sincerity and feebleness, he commended the clearance of his church. The task was Herculean. The trade of ecclesiastical preferments had long been the crying sin of Rome. By the double impolicy of avarice and fear, she had laboured to create an interest in the permanency of her establishment, by making it a resource for the high families of the provinces of her European empire. The more intelligent or intrepid sons of the nobles were destined for the prizes of the state and army. The more incapable were pensioned on the easy opulence of the immense benefices in the gift of Rome. The result may be conjectured, and the contemporary writers exhaust every power of language in describing the sensuality, ignorance, and pride flourishing under this flagrant system. The sale of the livings was frequent, and so notorious, that companies of brokers were established in Rome for their purchase; the higher ecclesiastics were sometimes only more conspicuous examples in the church, of the vices which they had acquired in their noble fathers' halls; the lower orders of the church naturally followed the standard set before them; and public ordinances were found necessary to prohibit the priesthood from "meddling in traffic, from frequenting taverns," then the receptacles of every impurity, and from indulging in the vices, by name, to which those taverns offered the temptation. The new Pope, not improbably stimulated by the general outcry for reform, published, as his first measure, a "Declaration," which had the effect of authenticating the whole of the public charge. He began with the tiara itself:—

"Many abominable things," said this important paper, "have been committed in this holy chair for several years past—abuses in spiritual things—excesses in the mandates given—in fine, every thing changed for the worse."

"No wonder that the sickness should descend from the head to the members, from the high pontiffs to the inferior prelates. In what relates to us, we shall endeavour that our Court, from which, perhaps, all this evil has proceeded, shall undergo

a speedy reform. If corruption has of late slowed from it, sound doctrine and reformation shall now proceed from the same source. To this we shall account ourselves the more obliged to attend, as the whole world appears most ardently to desire such a reform."

"I have accepted the Pontificate, that I might reform the spouse of Christ, assist it neglected and oppressed, and appropriate to the learned and virtuous the money which has of late been squandered on grooms and stage-players."

This ecclesiastical confession of the vices of the Papacy was followed by a lay declaration, scarcely inferior in the rank of its authors, and altogether superior in its practical effect: the long celebrated "Centum Gravamina," or List of Grievances, drawn up by the Diet of the German Princes, to be transmitted to Rome. It contained a detail of the corruptions of the priesthood, and the church system, which the princes declared that the iniquity and notoriety of the facts alone compelled them to submit to the Pontiff for their speedy reform; concluding by the suggestion of a General Council for the purpose in Germany. This document is the more unequivocal, from its proceeding from sovereigns still attached to the Popish cause—one of its sections being a confirmation of the Edict of Worms against Luther, and another a demand that the preachers of the "new doctrine" should be suspended in their functions.

These declarations were virtual pleadings on the side of Christianity; and Luther was not asleep while Popery was thus unconsciously shearing the locks in which the secret of its strength lay. He translated Adrian's Rescript into German, and sent it, illustrated by his own resistless remarks, to scatter light through the world.

We must hasten to the close of this great man's labours. Luther, in 1545, had reached his sixty-second year, with a frame, never of peculiar vigour, much exhausted by perpetual application, and the numerous cares which hourly thickened on the leader of the Reformation in those days of increasing peril. His chief associates had died round him, or were yielding to age. Zuinglius had perished in battle, and Oecampadius had died of grief for the loss of his admirable friend. A painful complaint, probably the result of his sedentary habits, had some years before tortured Luther; and under its paroxysms he seems to have sometimes abandoned the hope or the wish to live. But by temperance he continued to obtain vigour sufficient to employ himself in the revision of his numerous writings, and chiefly of his translation of the Scriptures.

But in this year his complaint became more decided, and his constitution, long racked by the stone, began evidently to give way. Violent head-aches, and the decaying sight of one of his eyes, gave symptoms of an event which must soon deprive Protestantism of its first and ablest friend. It was speedily complete. He had taken a journey to Eisleben, his native place, on the application of the Count of Mansfield, to arbitrate a dispute relative to the mines. In full consciousness of his own infirmities, he had undergone this harassing journey, as a promoter of peace.

"I write to you," said he, in a letter to a friend, a few days before he set out, "though I am old, decrepid, inactive, languid, and now with but one eye."

"When drawing to the brink of the grave, I had hopes of obtaining a reasonable share of rest: but I continue to be overpowered with writing, preaching, and business, in the same manner as if I had not discharged my part in these duties in the early period of life."

The journey was in the depth of a German winter. And by the overflowing of the river Issel, it was prolonged to five days. The effort was too much for his feeble frame; and after various changes of his disorder through three weeks, Luther, on the 18th of February, 1546, breathed the last breath of life, gifted with the most glorious donative and the loftiest duty that Providence gives to man—the promulgation of its own eternal truths, in simplicity, holiness, and power.

The highest honours were paid to his memory. His body, after lying in state in the principal church, was escorted by the principal nobility of the Electorate on horseback, and an immense concourse of the people, on its way to Wittemberg. Wherever it stopped, the population of the towns received it with tears and prayers; hymns were sung, and sermons delivered over the re-

mains of their common father in the faith. At Wittemberg, the whole University, the magistracy, and people, came out to meet the procession; and the funeral ceremony was begun by an oration of Pomeranus, a celebrated Divine, and closed by a pathetic sermon from Melancthon. His picture was afterwards hung up in the hall of the University. But his true and imperishable monument is THE REFORMATION.

## The Wesleyan.

MONTREAL, THURSDAY, FEB. 4, 1811.

ACCORDING to the intimation given in our last, we present our readers, in the present number, with some account of the geography and history of the vast Empire of China, which has of late especially, become the object of political speculation and general interest, from the difficulties which have for some time existed between the British and Chinese Governments, and which have been caused by the singular policy and proceedings of the latter—as appears from the account which we have already given of the origin of the war which Britain has felt herself compelled to enter upon against that singular and semi-barbarous empire. The British expedition, we learn, has been successful in its first attempt: having, in a few hours, and by an almost bloodless conquest, gained possession of the important island of Chusan.

Sincerely do we hope that this demonstration will be sufficient to bring the Chinese authorities to their senses, and induce them to accede to the reasonable and just demands of the British Government. Especially do we hope, that these events will be overruled by the all-wise Providence of God, to the opening of "a great door and effectual," for the preaching of the everlasting Gospel, and the establishing of Christianity among the atheistic myriads which compose the population of that vast empire, which falsely and foolishly calls itself "celestial."

THE admirable letters of "Omega" and "Catholicus," in this number, will, we have no doubt, be perused with interest by those of our readers who are acquainted with the proceedings of the Upper Canada Conference, in relation to the British Wesleyan Missionary Society; and who regret, with us, the violent language and spirit in which the Editor and some of the correspondents of the *Toronto Guardian* have thought proper to indulge. We hope, for the sake of our common Methodism, and especially for the honour of our divine religion, those writers will, in future, be more cautious, both as to truth and temper.

TEA.—In 1668, the East India Company imported "One Hundred Pounds weight of good Tea." In 1669, they imported 143 lbs.; and in 1678, 4,713 lbs., but this proved a glut in the market. In 1830, they imported 63,000,000 lbs. During the last twenty years, £90,000,000 has been paid into the British Exchequer, as duties upon teas.

PRINTING.—The proprietors of the *London Sun* state, that they have discovered a method of printing six thousand copies of their paper an hour, instead of two hundred!

PRAYER is the language of dependence. He who prays not, is endeavouring to live independently of God. This was the first curse, and continues to be the great curse of mankind.