

it so influential as to demand some apostolic precept or usage in its favour. This is a folly and evil which it is high time should be abated. Either apostolic authority is sufficient for us or it is not. If it is, then let us bind ourselves strictly to what we find enjoined upon or practised by the apostolic churches—neither more nor less; if it is not, then, in all matters not involving fundamental principles, we must be guided by what common sense and christian feeling dictate as best to be done. In point of fact, no apostolic sanction of any kind can be pleaded for a majority of the usages that most generally prevail among us; and in this case it is monstrous that any should think themselves entitled, simply on this ground, to oppose what all but themselves see to be expedient or necessary. This is but the old incongruity of straining out the gnat and swallowing the camel.

These remarks are a great deal better than any which I could write, and supply a suggestive article for the consideration of the brotherhood.

Montreal, 23rd July, 1863.

H. W.

Trans-Atlantic Retrospect.

To the exclusion of other matter this month, we give place to the following information in regard to recent occurrences in Madagascar, which, as they have been referred to, more or less extensively by the daily press, must have caused a thrill of horror throughout Christendom. The Secretaries of the London Missionary Society well remark that—

“The announcement of the unexpected events by the telegraph, on the 2nd July, could not fail to awaken the most painful surprise and bitter disappointment in the minds of all friends of civilization and social improvement, and especially among the supporters of Christian missions, who had cherished sanguine hopes and put forth corresponding exertions for the diffusion of Christianity on behalf of the numerous and benighted population of Madagascar.

“The letters received by the Indian mail yesterday confirm the two important and painful facts previously announced, and the Directors embrace the earliest opportunity of communicating to their constituents, and to the Christian public in general, the intelligence which they have received from their highly-valued agent, the Rev. William Ellis, who was a witness of the affecting events which he describes. In consequence of the non-intercourse between Madagascar and Mauritius during the spring, no intelligence had been received from the island for the last five months, and it has been during this period that the extraordinary events narrated by Mr. Ellis have occurred.

“That Radama was for several years the sincere friend of the oppressed Christians during the tyrannical reign of the late queen, we have the strongest evidence. His utmost influence was exercised to protect them from persecution and to deliver them from bondage, and his own life was frequently risked for their preservation. Since his accession to the throne the same disposition has characterized all his public proceedings; while he has proclaimed just and equal liberty to all classes of his subjects, he has afforded special countenance and encouragement to the native Christians in the profession and diffusion of the Gospel both by his example and by his acts. But although Radama was distinguished by many amiable qualities, by an instinctive hatred to cruelty, by great respect to Mr. Ellis and his associates, and by an evident interest in their instructions, yet he never avowed himself a Christian nor intimated his intention of becoming one. Indeed, it was an occasion of habitual regret that his excellent qualities were not only found in connexion with manifold infirmities, but with positive evils. His impulsive and excitable temperament exposed him to the snares which unprincipled foreigners threw around him, and his midnight dissipation appeared in strange contrast with his professions of interest in Christianity and respect for its teachers.