



A Monthly Magazine of General Literature.

\$1.50 A YEAR, IN ADVANCE.

Best Articles for publication solicited.

All Communications to be addressed to F. CALLAHAN,
Printer and Publisher, 35 St. John Street, Montreal.

MONTREAL, OCTOBER, 1874.

CATHOLIC EDUCATION.—Professor Goldwin Smith has lately spoken at great length, in Toronto, on the question of education, and much appears in his lecture that is interesting, much, also, that challenges criticism. We had intended to write at some length in reply to his statements in reference to education in Catholic countries, and the general influence of the Catholic religion upon the world of letters. So ably, however, has the learned gentleman been replied to by His Grace the Archbishop of Toronto that it is scarcely necessary to offer further, at present, in the way of refutation. But, having at hand the valued testimony of Samuel Laing, in his "Notes of a Traveller," on the state of education, Protestant and Catholic, in Europe, we venture to submit it. Mr. Smith spoke of Protestant countries as the "educators" *par excellence*. Mr. Laing, a Scotch Presbyterian, speaks thus :

"In Catholic Germany, in France, Italy, and even Spain, the education of the common people in reading, writing, arithmetic, music, manners, and morals, is at least as generally diffused, and as faithfully promoted by the clerical body, as in Scotland. It is by their own advance, and not by keeping back the advance of the people, that the popish priesthood of the present day seek to keep ahead of the intellectual progress of the community in Catholic lands; and they might, perhaps, retort on our Presbyterian clergy, and ask if they, too, are in their countries at the head of the intellectual movement of the age? Education is in reality not only not repressed, but is encouraged by the popish church, and is a mighty instrument in its hands, and ably used. In every street in Rome, for instance, there are, at short distances, public primary schools for the education of the children of the lower and middle classes in the neighbourhood. Rome, with a population of 158,678 souls, has 372 public primary schools with 482 teachers, and 14,099 children attend-

ing them. Has Edinburgh so many public schools for the instruction of those classes? I doubt it. Berlin, with a population about double that of Rome, has only 264 schools. Rome has also her university, with an average attendance of 660 students; and the Papal States, with a population of 2½ millions, contain seven universities. Prussia, with a population of 14 millions, has but seven. These are amusing statistical facts—and instructive as well as amusing—when we remember the boasting and glorying carried on a few years back, and even to this day, about the Prussian educational system for the people, and the establishment of governmental schools, and enforcing by police regulation the school attendance of the children of the lower classes.

"The statistical fact, that Rome has above a hundred schools more than Berlin, for a population little more than half of that of Berlin, puts to flight a world of humbug about systems of national education carried on by governments, and their moral effects on society. It is asked, what is taught to the people of Rome by all these schools?—precisely what is taught at Berlin,—reading, writing, arithmetic, geography, history, languages, religious doctrine." —(*Notes of a Traveller on the social and political state of France, Prussia, Switzerland, Italy and other parts of Europe during the present century.*)

The learned Professor, of course, singled out Spain for special censure; yet we see that Mr. Laing does not except but specially includes that country in his good account of Catholic education, and we know that the Office of Public Instruction at Madrid, just before the fall of Isabella's throne, published some interesting official returns relative to the libraries and schools in the kingdom. According to these documents the national libraries in Spain contained 1,166,595 volumes, thus divided:—Library of Madrid, 300,000; Central University, 300,000; Barcelona, 136,000; Salamanca, 55,000; Palma and Majorca, 35,000; Mahon, 11,000. The archives at Simancas consisted of 70,278 packages of manuscripts, of various sizes, and those at Alcala de Henares of 35,160. There were at that period 10 universities in Spain for general instruction, 11 for fine arts, 1 for music, 2 for manufactures, 1 for diplomacy, 5 for commerce, 17 for navigation; 27,000 infant or free schools, and 77 institutions for training teachers. The amount giving by government for public instruction for the year 1868-69 was 23,000,000 reals, to which the communes throughout the kingdom added 110,000,000 reals.