

NOTES OF THE MONTH.

Notwithstanding many fears of war, there are, in Europe, more peaceful signs, attended by a slight revival in business. So long as there is suspicion of coming war, capital will be withheld from the enterprises of trade, and the masses will be in want. What a pity that the nations of the earth will not learn to be at peace! At present the spear is not turned into the ploughshare nor the sword into the pruning hook, but the reverse. To expect industrious people to work and moneyed men to give them anything to work at, with so many guns and rifles before their eyes, is expecting too much of human nature. Fenianism hurts business in Great Britain, by disturbing the public mind. Yet it is said that Ireland was never so prosperous. Loyal people in the country districts are complaining of the want of security. The public mind is in a turmoil about a great many questions. One of the evils of a free country is perpetual agitation. There is no rest. No sooner is one great question settled than forth starts another. We are thus doomed to unrest in this world. The great question of education is receiving much attention, and a large party is in favor of its being compulsory. So in these happy times children are to be educated whether they or their parents will or not, and we are now entering upon a golden period, when good reading, good writing, good spelling and good cyphering will be universal, an error in grammar will be unknown, and nothing will be heard in the street or the field but the purest diction, the most unassailable logic, the most perfect grammar and the most sublime arithmetic.

Another important question at present is the permanence of the Protestant Church of Ireland. A commission is now enquiring into the relative strength of that Church with reference to the population. Its friends and foes are preparing for a conflict, the ultimate issue of which will probably be its downfall. Fenianism will frighten the English public into a measure to which nothing else would ever have reconciled them. Its state is so precarious that by disendowment it will become stronger than ever and Popery will lose a grievance, upon which agitators have perpetually harped. Many of the Catholics do not wish the revenues of the Irish Church. They prefer voluntarism, which is more akin to bigotry and conducive to power over the masses.

A new Bishop is to be consecrated for Natal, in place of Colenzo, but as no mandamus can be obtained from the Queen, and a consecration in England would be illegal it has been decided to hold it in Scotland, against which Dean Ramsay and two others have protested. Mr. Macrory, the Bishop elect, is from Oxford, and is probably a very decided high-churchman, so that, bad as

Colenzo is, they may have gained very little by the change. The half-way house to infidelity is quite as respectable as the half-way house to Rome, where ignorance and crime abound. It is now positively stated that the Bishop of Oxford has apostatised to Rome: so that now all the sons of the late distinguished and pious Mr. Wilberforce, who by his eloquent advocacy did so much for the liberation of the slave, and, by his "practical view of Christianity," so much for true godliness, are become Romanists. People wonder at such changes among men of education and intelligence; but it is precisely their education and their intelligence that are to blame for them. If men are placed where they learn a wrong education and receive wrong principles, the more intelligence they have the more earnestly they will reason from those principles. When once high-church principles are adopted by any man, if he is a man of honesty and intelligence he will soon go to Rome. High-church principles are essentially popery. There is only one escape from the consequences, and that is a surrender of the principles. Once such principles have been adopted then such a man should join the Pope, and all true friends of the Church of England will wish such false friends to leave her. Such defections will be a source of strength and will prompt the evangelical party to take a firmer stand, of which even now there are indications. What a pity that the great and noble Church of England would not return to the principles of the Reformation! We could never quarrel with episcopal principles moderately held, but no church can remain evangelical that exalts the sacraments at the expense of the gospel. Paul did not; but put them lower; and so should we.

The Queen's book, containing a journal of her and the late Prince Albert's visits to the Highlands, has met with an immense sale in a very short time and has already realized a very large profit for the publisher. It is to be translated into French, and will, no doubt, be very attractive to that susceptible race of people, the democrats of whom may learn, that all kings and queens are not monsters, but beings full of the milk of human kindness, and fine specimens of cultivated human nature. The book indicates on the part of her Majesty a strong love of the Highlands and Highlanders. While the domestic affections appear to be a very strong element in her character, still there are many indications of a mind capable of forming an accurate judgment upon the politics of nations and their leading characters. Many of the descriptions of scenery are capital word-sketches. References to religion come in naturally, and the utterances are as unaffected specimens of true religious feeling as are to be found in any religious autobiography and vastly more like sincerity than in many of them. The diction is pure, natural and easy.