

THE CANADIAN
CHRISTIAN EXAMINER,
AND
PRESBYTERIAN MAGAZINE.

NUMBER 6.

JUNE, 1839.

VOLUME 3.

RELIGIOUS COMMUNICATIONS, ETC.

FOR THE CHRISTIAN EXAMINER.

ON THE DUTY OF THE PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH, TO
THE ROMAN CATHOLICS OF LOWER CANADA.

The commencement of some enterprises is itself an earnest of their accomplishment, for the principal difficulty in the way may be overcome when a beginning has been made. Hence the proverbial saying to be found in several languages—"A work begun is half ended." We would not now stay to note all the conditions that must be found in the commencement of an undertaking in order to warrant us to infer the certainty of its completion; suffice it to say, that the enterprises of Christian benevolence, competent for societies, or ecclesiastical assemblies, must be taken up with a oneness of purpose, and from a deep conviction of duty and feeling of dependance on the blessing of the Holy Spirit in order to permit the hope that they will be prosecuted to a successful termination.

Considering this, and reviewing the records of the Synod of the Presbyterian Church of Canada, we cannot but think that some of its undertakings have been begun without any proper sense of their importance, or without counting the cost of success in them. It would be easy to name several whose history is this:—they were resolved to be

deeply important, were entrusted to committees, and were never more heard of. We are about to name one of these measures, and in doing so, we mean to insinuate no other censure against the mover of it, or the committee on whom it was devolved, than that to which we ourselves as members of the Synod are justly liable. The measure to which we refer, is "An Overture for missions to the aboriginal inhabitants scattered over the territories of British North America." It now seems to us that the error committed in regard to the entertaining the project of such missions was not that the scheme was too vast; though it is a vast undertaking to send Missionaries as was contemplated into the regions around Hudson's bay, especially for a Church like ours so destitute of funds, of Missionaries, and of what can in some measure command both a Missionary Spirit; but that we were overlooking a far wider, and more important Missionary field, and that nearer us, yes, at our very doors. We allude, not to the locations of new settlers; these, small as our strength is, have not been altogether neglected by us; but to the French population of Lower Canada. This amounts, we believe, to well nigh half a million of souls, and, when we reflect on the gross ignorance in which, by the admission of all, they are involved;