

The Convent of Mount Saint Bernard.

In the centre of a narrow defile, the convent of the grand Saint Bernard shows itself to the traveller like a port in a storm. There I was received by the pious monks, with a warmth and sincerity that could not have been surpassed, had the object been their dearest kinsman. In a moment my snow-encrusted cloths were taken off; and dry linen, with a complete change of dress enabled me, amid many congratulations on my safe arrival, to sit down to supper in the refectory. It was a "mengo day," and consequently, we had no delicate cheer; but exercise and toil had sharpened my appetite, and the plainest food to me seemed delicious. A few short prayers repeated by all the monks, preceded and followed this meal; which, at an early hour, I was conducted to my cell, where an excellent bed completed; the measure of the day's enjoyment; and there, regardless of storm which raged without, I soon fell into a sound and refreshing slumber.

The convent of the grand St. Bernard is built upon the banks of a small lake, at an elevation of eight thousand and seventy-four feet above the level of the sea, a height at which, in the old world, no other habitation is known to exist. The winter there lasts nine months; and even in the very height of summer it often freezes. The winds, confined in the narrow defile that encloses the convent, blow almost uninterruptedly, and with such violence, as sometimes to raise whole mountains of snow, and darken the atmosphere with its flaky clouds. Seldom indeed, is a clear sky enjoyed there; in general, dark vapors envelope the mountains, and veil the convent in impenetrable obscurity. Under shelter of the neighbouring rocks, the monks have formed several small gardens—miserable gardens indeed—producing, by incessant attention, few wretched herbs by the month of August. All the necessaries of life are brought at great expense, from the neighbouring valleys. At the western extremity of the lake is a small plain on which formerly stood a temple consecrated to Jupiter. The mountain itself was called Mons Jovis, until that appellation was lost in the name of its celebrated founder.

The convent of St. Bernard is open to all travellers, without distinction of age and sex, country or religion. On them the ecclesiastics lavish all their assistance, and bestow all their consolations, seeking no other recompense for their cares, no other indemnity for their expenses, than the throbs of conscious self-approbation which such a life cannot but ensure. During the summer the passage of the mountain is always practicable and safe; but when the snow begins to fall it is extremely hazardous. The severity of the cold, the density of the fogs, and the frequency of sudden whirlwinds, are not the only dangers to be feared: every moment the traveller runs the risk of being swallowed up by an avalanche, or precipitated into some hidden abyss. The number of persons who cross the grand Saint Bernard every year, is reckoned at from fifteen to

twenty thousand; it is principally frequented during the fairs of Lombardy, or when either side of the Alps happens to experience a scarcity. The convent is calculated to accommodate from twenty five to thirty of the highest class of travellers, and about three hundred of an inferior degree. The former have excellent apartments and single beds; the latter sleep in two large saloons, containing a great number of litters. From the month of December to that of May, two domestics called maronniers, daily descend the mountain to certain distance; the one towards the Valais, the other towards Piedmont. They carry a small quantity of bread and wine, and are accompanied by large dogs, trained to discover the path through the midst of the snow, and to hunt out tracks of strayed travellers. When the maronniers do not return at their usual hour, or when a traveller more fortunate than his companions, reaches the convent and announces their distress, the ecclesiastics themselves, armed with long iron shod soles, sally forth amid the snows, and hurry to the relief of the distressed wanderers; they re-animate and support their drooping spirits and frames; advancing before them, clear a passage through the snow; and not unfrequently carry them by turns on their shoulders. The acuteness and courage of the dogs are, however, most conspicuous when in quest of travellers, surprised by an avalanche. If the victims of these mournful accidents be not too deeply buried, the dogs discover them by scent; but this instinct not being sufficiently powerful to enable them to penetrate far through, the monks supply the defect by sounding with their long pole, the suspected places. When, from the nature of the resistance, they have reason to suspect that a human body is touched, they quickly clear away the snow, and often have the happiness of restoring life to the unfortunate, on whom, but for them, light and life had closed for evermore. In triumph they carry them to the convent, and there cherish them in their bosom as long as wearied nature requires their care. Yet these are men, who, if they should venture, henceforth, to visit Great Britain or Ireland, would be declared in a law enacted in 1829, guilty of a misdemeanor.

From the Catholic Advocate.

FOUNDATION OF PROTESTANT FAITH.

(Concluded from page 145.)

Jesus Christ had taught the necessity of doing works of penance—works of charity—good works. The church had, inculcated the same necessity. But the Protestant rule soon made it appear "that good works possessed no value, and were unnecessary." Nay, it led some to think "good works" rather an *obstacle and impediment* to salvation. Works of penance, of mortification, and acts of self-denial, though always encouraged by the church, and practised by Christ and his disciples, were pronounced superstitious and abominable. The confession of sins, which evidently was founded on the power left with the ministry, "to forgive or to retain sins," was declared useless, and

abolished. The public worship of the church, so solemn, grand, impressive, and full of signification, was denounced, and frittered down to a sterile, cold, informal, soulless and unmeaning thing.—And the vague declaration of "faith in the Lord Jesus," or "faith on the Lord Jesus," was devised as a substitute for sacraments, good works, the virtues, and the public ritual. And this "faith in the Lord Jesus," meant any and every thing you please. It included every variety of opinion. It suited the opinions of to-day, and the opinions which might be devised to-morrow. It was ready, to shelter the innovators who had already broached their views, and the innovators who might come forth from the womb of future time, with new interpretations, new conceits, new darkness, mist, and obscurity, where already all was darkness and obscurity.

The principle was, "read the Scriptures, and judge for yourself." But every man who took time and trouble to read and judge, was not content to do so for himself, but must needs do so for every one who would listen to him.—They succeeded to separate many from the unity of faith, but they could not agree on any articles of faith, which would be universally received. No tenet could be considered as settled and ascertained. No number of men could unite in the profession of the same tenets, without superadding the restriction of a confession of faith to the Scriptures. This confession was the authoritative voice of their particular church, and all who submitted to be governed by it, had of necessity to sacrifice their great principle, "the Scriptures and private judgment." The principle operation, was destructive of unity of faith, and a partial and limited unity could only be obtained by a confession of faith, which virtually destroyed the principle. The principle, then, is unreasonable, destructive of faith, and impracticable. It follows plainly that Protestants have no reasonable foundation for their system of religion. They have rejected that foundation which is found in submission to authority; they have expressly refused such submission; and their substitute in practice destroys faith, and by its absurd and ruinous consequences forces them to recur to the conservative operation of that principle of authority which they had denounced.—They inconsistently submit to a church of their own fabrication, which has no authority, after having refused submission to the church which has the Apostolic succession, and can exhibit through every age, the effects of her wise and heaven aided administration.

The Puseyites, the Anglicans, &c.

A NEW CHURCH OF ENGLAND.—The following statement is given on the authority of a D. D.—"Secession from the Church.—The necessity for a general secession of the evangelical clergy from the Establishment, and the formation of a more pure and simple episcopal communion than the present circumstances of the Church afford, or its future prospects seem likely to realize, are most anxiously

discussed and canvassed in influential clerical circles throughout the country. The propriety of some vigorous evangelical movement is almost universally acknowledged; and the project of a secession meets with extensive acceptance, and bids fair to obtain the zealous co-operation and support of the more enlightened and pious members of the Church, who have long deplored its corruptions, which, in the nature of things, are, perhaps, inseparable, from its present anomalous position in connection with the State. The constitution of the new communion, it is supposed, will be framed on a more apostolical model than is that of the existing one, while it will be free from those political incumbrances and defects which are such crying evils, in its present unseemly condition as a church, and to adjust and remedy which more legislative appliances have proved utterly insufficient. Some of the most distinguished ornaments of the sacred bench are expected to head the secession, which, it is understood, will include also, a considerable number of other dignitaries of the church whose sympathies are in unison with the "Anglo-Catholic" party, the proceedings of which have contributed so much to distract and degrade her, and even to endanger her existence as a national institution."—*Gloucester Journal*.

THE SCOTTISH FREE CHURCH IN ENGLAND.—The warm reception which the deputations every where receive sustains them amid their all but unexampled efforts; and from week to week the conviction gathers strength, that the religious interests of the two sections of the island are about to become very closely knit together. What the Westminster Assembly in vain attempted to accomplish, may, soon, to some extent, be effected by Lord Aberdeen's Act, which virtually overthrew the Scottish Establishment, and caused the setting up of the Free Church in its stead.—*Tablet*.

FIRE ESCAPE.—A new escape, lately tried with success at Newcastle, consists merely of four breadths of strong canvass, double seamed, fifteen feet long, with a stout white rope sewed all round the edge like a ship's sail; in each side, there are twelve apertures and eight at each end, sufficient to allow a man to put his hand through to enable him to get a good hold of the rope, by which six men on each side and four at each end will stretch the canvass so tight that a person may leap thereon from any window, and will be caught in the canvass without any harm. Any person may carry this fire-escape under his arm. The one tried on Tuesday was brought from the station-house, and spread under a window at the end of the yard, in one minute and a half. After it had been tried with success from two or three of the windows, police-constable No. 44 very coolly ascended the house-top and jumped down into the canvass without the slightest inconvenience. The house is three stories high, but the way the man jumped off would make the distance he fell much higher.—*Tyne Mercury*.