

CONTRIBUTORS' DEPARTMENT.

THE REPLY OF THE NINETEENTH CENTURY.*

Sir, I am growing old. It is true I have nearly a quarter of my life's span yet to run, and one may do a good deal in twenty-two years, especially when, as in my case, one can count on energy up to the last moment. Still, as you do not fail to remind me, I am old, and, like the beast in the fable, you, forsooth must throw up your heels at me. You admit that you owe me a sort of filial loyalty, or fealty, and, judging by your very pronounced views on the said virtue of loyalty, I should have hoped your mouth might have been "*chained to the faults*" of your mother age. Your expression is a peculiar one, Sir,—and I hope before I finish that I may succeed in "*chaining*" you to a good many other faults, for which you are more answerable than I am.

Your stock of loyalty, which we find deficient at the present moment, is no doubt all devoted to the "*righteous cause*" of the House of Stuart, of which you are so fond. I am sorry that the "*crop-headed rascals*" you complain of, and those very much "*overrated*" men, Hampden and Sydney, and still more the innate stupidity and perfidiousness of the Stuarts themselves, placed it out of my power to preserve even a Pretender of their blood to receive your congenial homage.

Although you quote Carlyle to the effect that my children are mostly fools, I can as-

sure you they are not such fools as to interfere between you and your sainted martyr to any appreciable extent. You may have him all to yourself, and after Milto., Macaulay and Carlyle polished him off, it will be some time before he will need another Eikonoklastes.

So I am disposed to "*boast and bubble over*" at my achievements in popular education? I ought to be ashamed of *my* previous neglect, eh? Upon my life, I thought my elder brothers and sisters, eighteen of them in number, were the parties chargeable with neglect! It is true I might have set about it sooner; but reflect, my candid friend, I had a hard battle to fight with prejudice and ignorance, with persons who objected to my teaching servants to read because it would make them discontented, and to my setting poor children to their copy books, because, forsooth, if they learnt to write, the crime of forgery would increase so greatly! Can it be barely possible, Sir, that some of your arguments on this head remind me forcibly of these early struggles of mine?

It appears that the "*the dark ages*" is a mis-nomer. "*Education was the heritage of the Church and the poor.*" The pulpit eloquence of Europe in the middle ages has never been surpassed, for, as you tell us, the preachers were at once schoolmasters and priests. How shockingly the historians must have deceived us! I was under the impression that the services of the Church were conducted in a dead language, that the pulpit was a comparatively modern innovation, and that, if one solitary preacher arose, such as Savonarola, (and I know none other worthy of the name) the Church burnt him very speedily. Quite right, of course; why

* NOTE.—This contribution is published as a reply to three articles, entitled, "A Quarrel with the 19th Century," which recently appeared in the pages of a literary contemporary, "The Canadian Monthly," from the pen of Mr. Martin J. Griffin, of Halifax. Insertion is given to the paper not to encourage controversial writing, still less to give place to discussion in religious polemics, but as it deals with some historic facts in regard to education, and other kindred topics, of presumed interest to our readers.—ED. C.E.M.