

TRACTS BY CANADIAN LAYMEN.

NO. 4.

MERE ANGLICANS.

The position and circumstances of the Church of England tend to develop in her certain types of character peculiar to herself. It is our present purpose to consider one of these types, and to define as well as we can the conditions which go to make up the 'mere Anglican.' This *genus* is ubiquitous in our communion, but arrives, we are bold to say, at its greatest perfection in Canada; and its special features are more readily traced among the clergy than among the laity.

By a 'mere Anglican' we mean a man who is unable to recognize the Catholicity of any orthodox body outside of his own; and who scrupulously venerates the Rubrics of the Prayerbook, always excepting that Rubric on Ornaments, which is meant to be read concurrently with them all. In his eyes, the English Church, as she exists at any particular time, is spotless and incapable of improvement; while all other communities are either grovelling in hopeless superstition, or blindly following sectarian guides in quest of uncertain pasture. In a word, he is ready to say in good earnest what Lord Byron wrote in satire:—

"I know we are crammed
With the best doctrines till we quite overflow;
I know that all save England's Church have sham'd,
And that the other twice two hundred churches
And Synagogues have made a sorry purchase."

The 'mere Anglican' usually acknowledges Apostolic Succession, because it fences him off from the swarm of heterogeneous sects by which he sees himself surrounded; and he preaches Baptismal Regeneration, because he finds that doctrine indelibly stamped on the offices of the Church, and he is too honest to deny a principle to which he is thus formally pledged. Farther than this he rarely goes, though he is believed to hold higher doctrine than he delivers, and has even been known, in a strange pulpit, to reveal a theory of the Real Presence, albeit modified by many reservations. Defect is his chief error. Seeing so much of good in what there is of him, we naturally wish for more. As he stands, he belongs