

religion, and the professors of religion, are equal. So far the civil power does not destroy, does not in the slightest degree impair any man's civil right under a religious pretence. An English Nonconformist does not find himself brought face to face with this great fact without a painful remembrance of the deep social wrong to which his conscience subjects him in his own country. But were this wrong annihilated, we might still be some way from paradise. One would suppose, that where the civil power bears with all the differences of religious communities as it does in the United States, the communities themselves would learn to bear with each other. But unfortunately this does not follow. Where State preferences are withdrawn the most will be made of ecclesiastical preferences. If I cannot be told that I should go to a particular church because it is the State Church, I shall be very sure to be told that I ought to go there because it is the only true Church. All opinion contrary to the opinion of the partizan is error, all error comes from some bad quality in the man who errs, and what more fitting than that bad names should be given to bad men? The *rationale* of all persecution lies there. Hence the Catholic of New York is found to be as exclusive as the Catholic of Vienna; and many of the Episcopal clergy in that city are as highminded, in the ecclesiastical sense, as the same class of men in Canterbury. I saw enough when in the United States to enable me to understand how pleasant a thing it might be to a rabid Presbyterian to discharge vitriol at a Congregationalist; and I suppose there are Congregationalists who know how to deal with such amiable polemics after their own manner. We want the American liberty, all of it, and something more. Political persecution is dying a lingering death. The death of social persecution will be more lingering still.

SHORT PASTORATES.

"I have been assured that in some of the Congregational churches of the United States, there has been not long since a deep and steady movement of heart towards a religious life. Where this state of things has been reported, I have no doubt that it happened; but I regret to say, the general condition of the churches of this order in New England does not appear to be by any means satisfactory. Time was, it seems, in those States when the connection formed between a pastor and his parish, or congregation, was regarded as a connection for life, and when it often lasted so long. But a great change in this respect has been at work for some while past. Not only has this connection come to be commonly of a very short duration, but a large number of churches seem to have learnt that it is best to avoid electing a pastor at all, preferring to engage ministers for a longer or shorter time simply as preachers. In the *Boston Recorder*, a little before the meeting of the Council in that city, a well-informed correspondent called attention to the following facts touching the state of Congregationalism in the states of New England:—

"In 1863, there were reported in these States 1,424 churches. Of these churches 730 were supplied with pastors; 469 with stated preachers; and 225 were vacant.

"There were also 1,580 ministers reported in the statistics. Of these 738 were pastors, 429 stated supplies, and 413 unemployed either as pastors or stated preachers."

"In the following extract, the case is presented still more definitely,—

"Nearly half of the Congregational churches in New England are either supplied by stated preachers, or are vacant; while we have an excess of unsettled ministers over the pastors of one hundred and four. In two of the States, Maine and Vermont, there are more stated supplies than settled ministers. The churches in the several States are supplied thus:—

Maine.....	71	with pastors, 121	with stated supplies.
N. Hampshire	82	" " 64	" "
Vermont.....	71	" " 84	" "
Massachusetts	319	" " 113	" "
Rhode Island.....	13	" " 7	" "
Connecticut	174	" " 80	" "