

THE HOME AND FOREIGN RECORD.

MAY, 1862.

THE AMERICAN STRUGGLE.

The most important event of the last twelve months has unquestionably been the mighty struggle going on in the neighbouring republic. It has deranged the commerce of the world, and self-interest would lead the nations of the earth to contemplate it with the deepest attention. But independently of this, the greatness of the struggle, the peculiar circumstances connected with it, the interest of the issues involved, the mighty consequences likely to result, must claim for it the thoughtful study of every intelligent mind. We do not consider that this is the place to discuss the questions involved. We do not by any means look upon this struggle as a religious one. It may have a bearing upon religion and a connexion with the progress of the Redeemer's kingdom, as every movement in the world has, but yet in its essential character we can see nothing, that entitles us to look upon it, either on the one side or the other, as properly a contest on behalf of religion. Hence we regard the practice, of which there is so much in some American papers, of one party applying to their opponents passages of Scripture which refer to the enemies of the Church, and even those which describe Christ in his contest with his enemies, and victory over them, as little short of blasphemy.

Still there are aspects of the struggle of a moral nature, claiming the attention of every Christian man. To a few of these we would now advert. The very first impression which a contemplation of the struggle must produce upon every right-thinking mind, is one of the deepest sorrow at the spectacle now presented. War at any time and under any circumstances is fraught with tremendous evils, but according to all past history, these evils are in civil war fearfully aggravated. This is already partially felt in the present case. Near relatives, even brothers, are engaged on opposite sides and meet in deadly conflict, while there are evidences that the peculiar rancour, which characterises civil war, already exists, and is increasing as the war advances. And then, when we consider the extent of the conflict, the numbers engaged, and especially that this is taking place in a Protestant nation, and that which, next to our fatherland, is entitled to rank as the greatest Protestant power in the world—a nation characterised by so many of the great qualities of the Anglo-Saxon stock—possessing such immense resources for good, and, with all its faults, wielding so vast an influence for the welfare of mankind, we may well regard the present war as the most lamentable spectacle, which modern times has witnessed. No man of right feeling can reflect on it without feelings of the deepest sadness. Doubtless the wise dis-