

Trans-Atlantic Retrospect.

DR. VAUGHAN ON RELIGION IN AMERICA.

We gave, in our issue for October, some extracts from Dr. Vaughan's account of his visit to the United States. We have not been able to find room till now for the remarks of so sagacious an observer on religious matters in that country.

CONGREGATIONALISM IN THE STATES.

"The Orthodox Congregationalists present 2,856 churches, served by 2,045 ministers, and the church members last year were 259,110. But these figures give no idea of the number of churches in the United States that are really Congregational—that is, that are self-governed, in distinction from the churches which allow their self-government to be more or less infringed by Presbyterian or Episcopal authority. The Baptists, in all their sections; the Christian Connexion; the Methodists called 'Wesleyan,' and some others; the Universalists, and the Unitarians, are all, in fact, Congregationalists, and the churches of all these bodies united amount to nearly 25,000. Add to this aggregate of Congregationalism for the United States, the aggregate from Great Britain and her colonies, and you have more than 30,000 churches in the world that may be said to be Congregational. Taking the word Congregationalism in its mere conventional sense, the Congregationalism of America has its chief seat in New England. But, taking the term in its largest sense, as denoting churches whose government is essentially popular, it is diffused over the four sections of the Union—New England, the Middle States, the Western States, and the Southern States, in about equal proportions.

THE WORKING OF VOLUNTARYISM.

"The Voluntaryism of the United States is so far efficient in meeting the religious wants of the community that no Protestant has any wish to see it meddled with by the State. The difficulty which is sometimes felt for a season, where the population is new and thinly scattered, is accounted nothing in comparison with the mischiefs which it is seen would follow from Government intrusion in such matters. Wherever a village comes, the village spire or turret is sure to be seen rising from its midst. If there be but one edifice, the presumption is that it is a Presbyterian, a Baptist, or a Congregational church, and possibly it may be used by more than one denomination. But the provision is sure to be made, and you will probably see more than one such structure where you might suppose one would have been enough. If places of worship, and large supplies of ministers could make a people religious, the people of the United States should be the most religious people in the world. My travelling companion tells me, that from an elevation near New Haven he could trace no less than seventeen Congregational churches, all being, in the language of the country, parish churches—that is, churches in which as many of the people in the place as desired pastoral assistance might obtain it. Of course, the religious denominations in America have no ancient cathedrals, no churches that were once connected with venerable abbeys; but the architecture of their churches, both in city and country, will admit of comparison with that of our own new or recently-built churches, though the wealth of the United States at present is not much more than half that of Great Britain. Such are the virtues of willingness in a good cause, when in the hands of men who have the courage to trust it.

DENOMINATIONAL BIGOTRY.

"I wish I could speak of the absence of State intrusion with regard to religion as having sufficed to lay the spirit of religious bigotry; but that I cannot do. It is quite true that in America no religious sect is entitled to take precedence of any other. In the eye of the State, and in the eye of the law, the ministers of