

## A MONTREAL REVIEWER ON KANT.

"Sus Minervam docet."

Some time ago the *Montreal Gazette* published a series of pretentious essays by a writer who assumed the *nom de plume* of 'Kuklos.' These essays have now been reprinted from the *Gazette*, and have appeared in a number of well-bound volumes, nine or ten of which have found their way to the McGill College Library. Our curiosity impelled us to examine these performances, and to ascertain the merit of this paragon, who is being so loudly advertised in in all our leading dailies. It is something so novel and unexpected to see the shop-keeping cits of Montreal turning their attention to abstruse metaphysical questions which have all along seemed so foreign to their tastes, that we have thought it might interest our readers to know what philosophical lights our city bids fair to produce, and what literary 'pabulum' is offered to the reading public.

But before calling the attention of our reader to these productions, we would have him remember that we do not regard them as in any way deserving of his notice; our only excuse for advertizing to them at all, being the fact that they have been so prominently obtruded on the public.

It is not our intention to pass in review all these, for we should despair of being heard through. It will be sufficient to examine one of them (the smallest), which amply illustrates the author's spirit and mode of procedure. We shall accordingly confine our remarks to the one which bears the modest title of "Supplement to Theology and Science, or the Rationalism of Metaphysics, being a Review of a book by Immanuel Kant, called Critique of Pure Reason, By Kuklos (John Harris)." The reader is at once offended at seeing a book of world-wide fame like the 'Kritik' of Kant, which revolutionized thought in Europe and marks an era in speculation, impudently designated as 'a book called Critique of Pure Reason'. Such an utter disregard of all literary *convenances* at the very

outset, does not speak favourably for the author. One is forcibly reminded of Swift when he affirms 'on the word of a sincere man that there is in being a certain poet called John Dryden, whose translation of Virgil was lately printed in a large folio, well-bound, and, if diligent search were made, for aught I know, is yet to be seen'; with this difference, however, that the ungracious sarcasms of the great satirist on his contemporaries are relieved by an inimitable raillery and sparkling wit, while the would be castigator of Kant has no charms of style to redeem his incompetency in the treatment of the subject.

Whatever may be the value of his contributions to other branches of science, Mr. Harris is certainly not seen to advantage in his first attempt to dabble in Metaphysics. To understand his position and disposition, we must remember what, according to him, is the criterion for determining whether a science rests on a sound basis. We are told that the question to be asked is: Does this science rest on Natural and Revealed religion as its basis, and does it conform to the rules of Theology? Mr. Harris will hear of no exceptions, and if the rules of Theology ran counter to the truths of mathematics, he would unhesitatingly renounce his faith in the latter. As may be presumed, he has found Kant guilty in this respect, and has undertaken to guard the reader from the pernicious influence of the Critique, by making overt all the 'unsense' which it contains from beginning to end. Hear his opening lines:—"In noticing this book, bringing it again, perhaps, prominently before the public, and calling attention particularly to certain passages in it; we do so under protest. We protest against any supposition that the book in a correct sense belongs to science; or that it has in itself any value to recommend its reconsideration by the public. On the contrary it has been, and still is, directly and indirectly, potent for mischief." A little lower down, Mr. Harris feels sure 'that the perusal of a few pages by a person whose mind is in a naturally healthy condition, must usually produce a degree of mental nausea sufficient to protect the ordinary individual from direct injury.' Mr. Harris, let us remark in passing, may rest assured that for a similar