

commenced by that Society. The first paper in the number bears the above title ; and we copy the whole of it, from its evident bearing not only upon the spiritual wants of Canada, but upon the cause of true christianity, both in our native country and throughout the world.]

“ The demands on Christian benevolence at the present time, are numerous and pressing. It behoves us, therefore, steadily to contemplate existing evils, that we may be prepared to labour strenuously for their correction, under a sense of our solemn obligations. The following statements are intended to aid this effort of the mind.

Highly favoured as our country is, it still presents a wide field for exertion. Though an advancement in knowledge has taken place, an appalling amount of ignorance remains. Multitudes are yet unable to read, or to do so with facility and pleasure ; others have received but little beyond elementary instruction. Education, as comprehending a desirable amount of mental and moral training, is exceedingly rare ; and hence, ignorance appears as a fruitful parent of error, superstition, vice, and crime. Infidelity is also displaying unwonted energy. Not only does it secretly diffuse its venom, but it stalks forth with unblushing front, speaking blasphemies ; yet attempting to hide its depravity under a profession of benevolence. Popery, too, is labouring for extension. Some of its tenets are, unhappily, maintained and promulgated by avowed Protestants ; while its open adherents are perseveringly carrying forward their plans, and calling on all Papists throughout Europe to unite weekly in prayer, for the conversion of England.

If now we pass to the British colonies, forcible appeals will also be made to Christian compassion. It is stated, by a zealous missionary in Canada, that there is every prospect

of many of the children of once happy professors of religion in England, becoming a species of white Indians, from the want of religious advantages. “ We meet sometimes,” he says, “ with young persons who do not know what we mean, if we ask when they heard a *sermon*.” In common with others engaged in the moral culture of the same part of our possessions, he entreats the Committee of the Religious Tract Society to send him libraries, as almost the only means of Christian instruction, which many are likely for a long time to enjoy.

The state of the penal colonies is likewise truly afflictive. The influence of large numbers of convicts, let loose among a free population, is to the last degree demoralizing. Nearly the whole community is affected by this mass of depravity. The fact is apparent from the frequency with which offences are committed. In Van Dieman’s Land, where the free population is 28,000 and the convict population 18,000, making a total of 46,000, it is estimated that no less than 16,900 offences were brought before the police in the year 1837. The number of *free* persons fined for drunkenness was about 2,800, or about one-tenth of that population. In New South Wales the convict population, in 1835, was 28,000, and the summary convictions during the year, were estimated to be about 22,000. The number of criminals convicted in the same colony, in 1836, of various offences, from murder down to larceny, was as 1 to 104 of the whole population ; while in England the proportion is only as 1 to 850. In the Parliamentary Report on Transportation, lately published, it is also stated, that the number of convictions for highway robbery (including bush-ranging) in New South Wales, exceeds the total number of convictions for *all offences* in England ; that the grossest crimes are as