

Trans-Atlantic Retrospect.

There is but little to note this month interesting to our readers. The Lancashire distress has, we trust, reached its height: the number of persons receiving relief is slowly diminishing, and there are hopes entertained that a large number of the operatives will soon find, at any rate, partial employment. It has been a fearful trial for England; but she has behaved herself right nobly in it, and has proved herself sound at heart, and worthy of the name and position which she occupies among the nations of the world. We hardly know which to admire most, the uncomplaining suffering of the thousands of famishing operatives and their families, or the large-hearted liberality of the body of the people, who, casting all former efforts of a similar character into the shade, have poured out their means day by day and week by week for the relief of their suffering fellow citizens. The account of the "Cotton Famine" will, when it comes to be written, form one of the darkest and yet one of the brightest chapters in English history. It is too early yet to indulge in any congratulations on returning prosperity; there is still an immense amount of distress; but we earnestly hope that every month we may note its decrease, until, by God's blessing, our fatherland shall have come out of the furnace of affliction, purified and elevated, we trust, and commanding more than ever the respect of the nations of the earth, and thus more than ever fitted for the great work the providence of God has assigned to her.

"There's never smoke but there's a fire," says the proverb, and we would fain hope that it is true with respect to the faint whispers about "Denominational Union," with which the year has opened; not organic union, such as has lately taken place between two of the Presbyterian bodies in this province, who have amalgamated, and become one corporation; but a closer union for evangelistic efforts, and the aggressive work of the Church of Christ. It is not that Congregationalists and Baptists and Presbyterians are to sink their differences and become one body, called by any one name they might choose, but that they should give up, as far as possible, separate, outside action, combine their efforts, economise their strength, and accomplish by united labours more than they could hope to do by the present system, in which so much strength and means is wasted on organization alone. To quote from an able article in the *Nonconformist* :—

"Might they not operate under one council—agree together upon the work to be attempted—map out the ground and allot to each church its distinct sphere of agency—discourage mere denominational competition, especially in the erection of rival places of worship—employ the same machinery for the visitation of the sick, the relief of distress, the distribution of tracts, the holding of religious meetings in the houses of the poor, the support and management of schools, and almost all the other methods by which churches are wont to operate upon the ignorance, frivolity and sin by which they may chance to be surrounded? For all external action, might they not, in process of time, come to regard themselves and to be regarded by others, as *the* Christian church of that town? Nay, might not a habit of united action gradually wear away the sharp edges of denomina-