

The Press and General Review

EPISCOPALIANISM.

The Bishop of Exeter will now, it is to be hoped, rest satisfied that he cannot, by a side-wind, revive for any practical purpose either the Upper or the Lower House of Convocation, and that he, in his high station, is just as amenable to the Queen's ordinary tribunals as the meanest of her subjects. In his relentless persecution of Mr Shore, he had the satisfaction of thrusting that victim of his episcopal wrath into Exeter gaol, but, after his scarcely less vindictive persecution of Mr Gorham, he will have the mortification of insinuating his more fortunate object of his ecclesiastical bigotry into the vicarage of Brampton Speke; besides, it is very sincerely to be trusted, paying him his legal costs. And by his discomfiture, that great principle of comprehension which has so long adorned the Church of England, is re-established and confirmed.

In the midst of the high church confusion worse confounded, which has followed the decision in Mr Gorham's case by the Privy Council, two things are very apparent. First, that the noise, the turmoil, and the disorder are entirely clerical; and are confined (even amongst the clergy) to a couple, or at most to three bishops, to a few tractarian archdeacons and a crowd of silly curates, whom Oxford has let loose on society, whose reading is greatly in advance of their judgment, and who, seemingly, will remain all their lives what certainly they now are great boys. Secondly, that these ecclesiastical rioters, in spite of all their protestations, their memorials and their flood of pamphlets, have not agreed on what it is they want.

They are all, it is true vastly dissatisfied with the composition of the appellate court which rebuffed the dogmatic tyranny of Bishop Phillips: so dissatisfied, indeed as to be nearly as rebellious and revolutionary in speech as the Chowlers and Growlers of the Crown and Anchor Tavern. But, unlike that red agricultural conclave, they know not what they want.

Some bawl out for Convocation; others shout for a Synod; one turns to the Bishops for help another demands the interference of the Laity to coerce the bishops into furious courses; this pamphleteer places all his hope in dogmatic teaching; 't'other is strongly of opinion that in the greater excommunication only is there any safety. Canon Townsend, of Durham, notwithstanding the cool 5000*l*. a-year he gets out of the Church for teaching the doctrines of the Reformation, posts off to Rome and begs Pio Nono to add to his own troubles and instruct us heretics, by summoning a General Council; whilst Professor Maurice, of King's College, issues penny tracts in Fleet-street, recommending his reverend brethren to visit his tailor's shop somewhere near Oxford-street, and there to learn that *Christian Socialism* is the remedy for all their ecclesiastical woes as for all our national griefs. Mr Sewell, of Oxford, and late of St. Columba's, Ireland, contemptuously and angrily rejects and repudiates Convocation; stamping his foot he denounces it as "a civil creation—a clerical parliament—an institution for purposes of finance—to which the church owes her present trouble!" After the fashion of the Cameronians, nothing less than "a synod of God's ministers, for proclaiming His word," will satisfy this gentleman who seems to know a little of everything but the Bible; though "with what form and precise jurisdiction," he intends to clothe his synod, when he gets it, he says, a "question for the profoundest research!" Mr Bennett, on the other hand, implores the Laity of Belgrave to arise and mob Buckingham Palace—to set the church right in this her danger! "The remedy," he, with comical mystery, assures that pious but polka-loving locality, "is with you!" His neighbor, Mr Irons, of the less fashionable, and, we fear, the also less moral Brompton, is much of the same mind. For he thinks that "a Bishop does not understand theology one shade better for being a bishop, nor a priest for being a priest," whilst Mr Keble, rising in audacity, boldly denies that the bishops "are representatives of the general mind of the church." Nor is this denial of Mr Keble's with him the mere proposition, he draws from it a practical conclusion, almost as revolutionary as the decision Ledru Rollin came to when he resolved to the *blouses* of Paris, that the Roman expedition being an infraction of the constitution, imposed on them the obligation of rebellion. For, argues Mr Keble, the bishops not being the representatives of the general mind of the church, the church never assented to the powers of this Judicial Committee; and for want of its assent, and because the act clothing it with powers was passed in the session in which ten Irish bishoprics were suppressed, it is the duty of the church to resist the decrees of that tribunal. And, in like manner, Mr Maskell, Mr Dodsworth, Mr Neald (all but Dr. Pusey, struck dumb by the decision it may be presumed), indulge in what poor Sydney Smith (oh, that he were still with us to pillory such ecclesiastical puppyism) used to call their "little books of nonsense."

To calm the perturbation, to smother the rebellion, and to avert insurrection of these red men of the Church of England, our busy Diocesan has introduced a bill into the House of Lords—not to send them all to the treadmill ecclesiastical—but to erect a purely spiritual court, of bishops only, to determine any ques-

tion of doctrine or tenets of the church of the realm arising either in a criminal or civil suit. In such an enactment the first thing that strikes one is the strange inaccuracy of its language. "The church of this realm!" There is here either ignorance very extraordinary, or (more likely) pretensions very presumptuous. For of "this realm" the ecclesiastical establishment of the southern division of this island is not the only church. Before the union with Scotland the "realm" consisted of England only, after that union, it included all Great Britain, subsequently to the union with Ireland, the word "realm" signifies the united kingdom, and the difference between the meaning of the terms "realm" and "dominions" is, that whilst the former is exclusive, the latter is inclusive of the colonies and transmarine dependencies. Now, as the established church of this part of the kingdom is not the established church of the northern portion of this island, it is only by an abuse of terms that the church of England and Ireland can be called "the church of this realm."

But the pretence on which the bill is founded is, that a court, composed of spiritual persons is necessary to give satisfaction to the church in the determination of such questions. Now, admitting for an instant this to be so, Bishop Blomfield ought, if there be any such necessity, to have plucked up courage to have gone much further than he proposes to do. For, after all, his new tribunal of bishops is only to have appellate jurisdiction; the bill still leaves original jurisdiction over "questions of doctrine or tenets of the church of this realm," to be exercised by laymen officiating as judges in the ecclesiastical courts. There is an inconsistency here quite fatal, we submit, to the assumption in which the bill originates, and wholly at variance with the theory that in criminal or civil suits questions of doctrine ought to be decided by churchmen. For, enact the Bishop's bill, and nine-tenths of these questions will still be decided by lay judges; it will only be where length of purse enables a litigant to appeal, that the episcopal court will come into operation.

But the pretence is wholly unfounded. There is no general wish for any such court on the part of the church. The ultra high churchmen, as we have seen, repudiate it as wholly insufficient for the emergency or crisis to which, in their excited imaginations, the church has been brought; and the low churchmen are utterly opposed to any measure, be it what it may that will increase the power of the bishops one jot: whilst to the constitution of "this realm," a court composed of spiritual persons is utterly repugnant: it would be intolerable alike to all our national traditions and to our legal habits. On this last point, indeed, Bishop Blomfield himself would appear to have misgivings, for his bill only directs his episcopal tribunal to certify its opinion to the Judicial Committee, and though it goes on to enact that the opinion "shall be binding and conclusive for the purposes of the appeal," and provides that it "shall be specially reported by the said Judicial Committee to her Majesty in council," it adds the important words, "together with their advice to her Majesty on such appeal." Now, if the opinion so certified "shall be binding and conclusive for the purposes of the appeal," and yet, notwithstanding the Judicial Committee has to report the opinion to the Sovereign, with their own advice to the Crown on such appeal, it is quite possible—nay, at present it would be most probable—that the "advice" of the Judicial Committee would clash with the "opinion" of the bishops, and in that event the Sovereign would have to choose between the "opinion" and the "advice." But the Sovereign, in such a dilemma, would be bound to seek responsible aid in determining which to prefer. So that this precious bill might, ultimately force the decision of "questions of doctrine or tenets of the church of this realm," on the political cabinet for the time being! Such are the absurdities bishops commit when they meddle with matters of this sort.

The bill is, in truth, a measure to place the sovereign in a "fix," to increase the discord and troubles of the church, to produce collision between the bishops and the highest judges of this realm," to exasperate the laity, and to introduce an entirely new principle into our national system of judicature. It will, if passed, settle nothing, and it may unsettle everything.

One thing, however, it certainly would do. It enacted—increased greatly the power of the bishops; and that probably is the very best reason which can be given for its summary rejection. By recent legislation, the episcopal order has obtained enormous powers over the temporalities of the church; and these powers a committee of the Commons has reported they have abused to their own personal and private advantage. By the absurd prejudices of the high church party, the bishops are in possession of inordinate authority over the great church societies furnished with wealth by the laity, to which they contribute sparingly and meagrely themselves; and of which their management was so objectionably offensive, as to lead to the formation of other societies independent of their control. And now it is proposed to give to the bishops legal jurisdiction "to determine any question of doctrine or tenets of the church of this realm, arising either in a criminal or civil suit." Why, give them this and they will be little short of masters of the realm.

It is not in an age when, for the church of

England, pretensions almost papal have been propounded, that the power of the bishops ought to be augmented. It is rather at such a time that the more rational views of the new Dean of Bristol, the Rev. Gilbert Elliott ought to prevail—viz., that it is "a church which is created by the law, and which may be changed by the law"—*Daily News*.

PROTESTANT DISSENTERS' DEPUTATION.

Yesterday a meeting of the members of this deputation was held at the King's Head Tavern, Poultry, for the purpose of taking into consideration the provisions of the Metropolitan Interment Bill, so far as they affected the interests of dissenters. Mr John Remington Mills having taken the chair, stated that in view of the clauses of the government measure were so objectionable that the committee had thought it necessary to call a special meeting of the Deputies upon the subject. After referring to those parts of the bill which were obnoxious to dissenters, in common with the great majority of the inhabitants of the metropolis, he said, that the clauses to which they particularly objected were those making provision for the compensation of the clergy of the church of England. No one denied that some alteration in the present system of interment was necessary, but it would be most unjust towards dissenters if the operation of any measure of public utility should subject them to additional grievances. Such, however, would be the effect of the government measure, if passed in its present form. Now they enjoyed the privilege of burying in their own grounds without the payment of fees to any clergyman, but under this bill they would be liable to a tax which would be levied to pay the annuities of the clergy, if the fees were insufficient for that purpose, and under the management of the Board of Health nothing but a deficiency could be expected. The committee had had an interview with Sir George Grey, and had represented their objections to the measure. He promised to take them into consideration, but held out no hope of any alteration in the bill. Under these circumstances, the committee had agreed upon a series of resolutions, admitting the necessity of some regulation of intra-mural interments, but condemning the details of the government measure, and protesting against any infringement of the rights hitherto enjoyed by dissenters. These resolutions were adopted by the meeting, and embodied in a petition to the House of Commons. A resolution was also passed directing the committee to draw up and print a letter, forcibly setting forth the objections of the deputies to the measure, and to forward a copy, with the chairman's signature attached, to every member of parliament, previous to the next debate on the bill.—*London Daily News*.

Ecclesiastical.

DRUMMOND AND GOULBURN CIRCUIT.

The labors of another Conference year have nearly closed: as far as they have gone, they have entered upon the records of eternity; and their effects will only be fully known in its bright light. In all human probability, my connexion with the church upon this Circuit, is about to close, perhaps forever. Assisted by brothers Curry and Wright, I have been serving the church in this place as Pastor, for the now closing year; it is therefore my duty to review the past, and as such a multitude of thoughts crowd my mind, I will try to throw them into some kind of order, beginning,

First with the origin of this Circuit. Seventeen years ago, as a church, we were nearly unknown to the people of this extensive Circuit—about that time the Rev. James Brennan became the Pioneer and Apostle of the New Connexion to this part of Canada. Never did the venerable men who then sat in Conference, make a better selection than that of brother Brennan, for the purpose of facing enemies, meeting objections, and opening up a new cause in the midst of deadly hostility. Few men, if any, then traveling, could have done as well—no man could have done better. A real hero, no foe could daunt him, no work discourage him, no difficulty stop him.—He spared no sacrifice of time, talent, labor, or money to secure the establishment of our principles in this section of Canada. For three successive years he toiled, wrote, preached, and labored upon this Circuit. He gained the love of scores, carried away with him the applause of hundreds, and with most here, memory still holds him in her shrine. He succeeded in opening up a number of preaching places, and in gathering in a few to the cause. He was succeeded by a sage, the venerable, holy Hales. Here again the wisdom of the "Sanhedrin" was displayed; Brennan who was full of zeal, eloquence, and courage, was followed by Hales, meek as Moses, loving as John, faithful as Peter, who could help but love him? Loved he was, and to this day loved he is. Under his unassuming but cautious Superintendency, the Circuit still increased; prejudices were surmounted, difficulties overcome, enemies lessened, and friends increased. Then came — but no; let the name be sealed up in the quiescence of eternal silence; poor unfortunate, unhappy man, God forgave him and save every clergyman from the love of spirit-as liquor. Then the Circuit got a deadly wound; some times since it did appear as if the "deadly wound" were healed, or about so to be; but from the time that brother Hales left the Circuit, though there have been some zealous, eloquent, and holy men upon it, yet it has never reached that point in success at which it had arrived under the labors of Brennan and Hales.

Second. As to its state when I undertook its Superintendency, I am sorry to say that I did not find thinks

in a prosperous state. The few, and they were very few, who were from principle attached to us, were sunk in despair, in consequence of seeing the Circuit, year after year, getting worse and worse, until it had dwindled away so far that upon the Drummond Circuit, there was not a single Class Meeting, no Circuit Steward, no Class Seward, no Class Leader, no Exhorter, and but one Local Preacher, and ten scattered members, so called. Confidence was sunk in the Conference, the very name of the Connexion was a reproach in the mouth of many; indeed, so far had things gone, that I will not for shame sake publish them; but an idea may be formed when one of our best friends, Mr. G——, seeing no prospects of better days, advised one of my colleagues, brother Curry, who happened to see him before I did, to leave the Circuit if he wanted to get anything for his labor, and to go and try in some place where the body was not known, to raise up a cause, for that here all hope of prosperity was now gone; indeed so appalling was the state in which I found the Circuit, that I returned to my place of residence, to recommend the Annual Committee to appoint brother Curry and myself to another sphere of labor, where at least we might have, if nothing more, the hope of raising an interest. At some appointments upon the Circuit, party feelings, family discords, jealousy of neighbours, old difficulties, &c., &c., were "eating as doth the canker." Indeed, there was nothing but division, leanness of soul, inactivity, want of discipline, and destitution of nearly everything essential to the prosperity of the Christian religion, in connexion with Methodism. This being the state of the Circuit when I arrived, I saw

Thirdly, That extra means were necessary in order to raise the Circuit, if indeed it could be raised, I therefore employed myself and colleagues in holding protracted meetings—all of which were successful to some extent—and it is admitted by all that one of the most extraordinary revivals of religion, that has ever been heard of in all this region, has been upon this Circuit during the present Conference year. Not scores only, but hundreds have, since last June, bowed the knee of humiliation and penitence at the footstool of mercy, and have been led to concentrate their thoughts and feelings on those moral features of character and conduct which affect their relationship and interests with Him, whose laws they had broken, and whose pardon they were imploring. At our regular meetings in some places upon the Circuit, I saw the plain indications of extensive revivals—I was not disappointed, first came the falling drops, then the teeming showers, and now the torrent of mercy is rolling on through the Circuit. In our protracted meetings our old and well-tried brethren, Couc. and Montgomery, together with our new ally, brother McElroy, have made themselves extensively useful; such zeal and perseverance as have distinguished their labors, in the blessed work of saving souls, will not, cannot lose its proper reward.—To inform your readers that this revival had been progressing in the midst of opposition to New Connexionism, and that she receives her proportion of what our Heavenly Father promised to His disciples, "persecutions also," would only be publishing what is every day occurring in our history. Those that will live godly in Christ Jesus, shall, while human nature is human nature, while the heart is unregenerated, while worldly feelings, and worldly principles, and worldly interests, and worldly love predominate in the mind, "suffer persecution;" but it is not to be wondered at that those persons who do not enjoy experimental religion should think that some in our revivals were speaking and acting under the influence of a temporary insanity; nothing is more disagreeable to opponents of experimental godliness, than revivals of religion; because nothing is so far beyond their comprehension, and nothing is so unconquerable; and it is because of this incomprehensible and unconquerable power of revivals that so much is said about them. In some of these meetings we have seen the mighty arm of the Lord made bare, for the time was come to honor His Zion, to collect many of His chosen ones, and to beautify His spiritual temple, by adding to it many, very many, living, choice stones. Wherever we erected the woody banners, the mighty God of Jacob was with us, and the word of His truth has been confirmed with signs and wonders, the right hand of our God has done valiantly. Some of Zion's most barren and solitary places have been glad, and have budded and blossomed like the garden of the Lord. He who binds the strong man armed, in answer to the prayer of faith, came in mighty power, and removed the moral night from the minds of scores, and in some places the communities have become vocal with the praises of Israel's King. At many of these meetings the great deep of the heart was entirely broken up, and the greatest depths of penitential sorrow were manifested, and as might be expected, from the above fact, the conversions were generally clear and bright, these facts I record, as an Ebenezer to the Lord.

Fourth. The obstacles in the way of this mighty and blessed work, have been neither few nor small; and them may be recorded, first, the extent of the Circuit and its consequent difficulty of proper management; the Circuit as at present constituted is, I believe, the largest in the Province, it embraces the following thirteen Townships:—Emsley, Drummond, Bathurst, Lanark, Ramsay, Pakenham, Fathroy, Huntly, Goulburn, Richmond, Gore, Marlborough, and Beakwith; in a new country like this, with horridly bad roads, the difficulty of travelling through such a number of large Townships, is self-evident. Another obstacle we had to contend with lies in the fact that the discipline, (if I am correctly informed) has never been enforced upon this Circuit, and there is a consequent ignorance of, and even prejudice against it; this has been a sore trial to me in my Superintendency of the Circuit. Another obstacle to our progress has been the want of active, intelligent business men to sit in our Leaders' and Quarterly Meetings; but thank God, this is being overcome, and we are now getting in some who will soon take a lead in this respect. Another difficulty we have had to contend against is the sad want of chapels, if we assemble in a private dwelling, there exists, perhaps in that neighborhood, a prejudice against the family who kindly open their house for preaching,