

may be charged on it, necessarily incident to an age when the science of criticism was imperfectly understood, and the stock of materials was much more limited, or at least more difficult of access, than at the present day. After every deduction, however, the cardinal's Bible has the merit of being the first successful attempt at a polyglot version of the Scriptures, and consequently of facilitating, even by its errors, the execution of more perfect and later works of the kind; nor can we look at it in connexion with the age, and the auspices under which it was accomplished, without regarding it as a noble monument of piety, learning, and munificence, which entitles its author to the gratitude of the whole Christian world.—Prescott's History of Ferdinand and Isabella. [And yet we learn, from another part of Mr. Prescott's noble work, that when the good Archbishop Talavera proposed to have the Scriptures translated into Arabic, for the use of the Moorish converts, Ximenes vehemently remonstrated against the measure. "It would be throwing pearls before swine," said he, "to open the Scriptures to persons in their low state of ignorance, who could not fall, as St. Paul says, to wrest them to their own destruction. The word of God should be wrapped in discreet mystery from the vulgar, who feel little reverence for what is plain and obvious. It was for this reason that our Saviour himself clothed his doctrines in parables when he addressed the people. The Scriptures should be confined to the three ancient languages which God with mystic import permitted to be inscribed over the head of his crucified son; and the vernacular should be reserved for such devotional and moral treatises as holy men institute, in order to quicken the soul, and turn it from the pursuit of worldly vanities to heavenly contemplations."]

THE CHURCH.

TORONTO, SATURDAY, JANUARY 23, 1841.

There has lately been transmitted to us the first number of a Monthly Review, recently issued at Toronto, designed to elucidate the mysteries of the Civil Government of the Canadas, and avowedly devoted to the system of public policy adopted and pursued by the present administration of these Provinces.

We have heard the opinion very earnestly advanced many years ago, that a publication of this sort was desirable and even necessary; that the people generally were ill-informed on all great public questions, and that their information—meagre and imperfect as it was—was usually received with the glosses and interpretations of interested or prejudiced parties; and that there was no authorized medium through which was conveyed the real sentiments of Government on the acts of their public policy, or the refutation of objections where those acts happened to be assailed. There is much of propriety in this view of the case; and we shall admit at once that, whether right or wrong in its views of public questions, the Government should possess some organ through which to express its opinions, where the public might look with confidence for an honest and explicit avowal of official intention, and obtain satisfactory explanation when this was either misapprehended or calumniated.

It is, we presume, for the purpose of carrying out this plan that the present Review has been got up; a work which, though by no means reprehensible for its tone or temper, is not of that popular stamp either as to style or arrangement which can be expected to command for it a very extensive reading. The articles are much too long; and although, in some instances, a little above the ordinary standard of Colonial newspaper discussion, they can scarcely be thought to claim a higher merit than that of a dull respectability. The substance of the leading article, which embraces fifteen double and closely printed pages, might, in skilful hands and in the absence of that pertinacious special pleading which marks nearly all its paragraphs, have been easily condensed, for all purposes of popular edification, into five; while the articles which succeed, upon the influence of the Union in the two Provinces respectively, although not subject in the same degree to the charge of diffusiveness, evince a general slovenliness of style, and much needless repetition.

We are not disposed to be particular in our criticism, nor do we think it needful to attempt the refutation of a single argument adduced; though what is, in our own estimation, a very powerful objection to the measure which its pages are employed to advocate, is very broadly admitted in the Review,—namely, that "a majority of the entire constituency of the Province will be [Roman] Catholics"; and that "it is likely enough a majority of the whole House of Assembly will be so too". The Review very rightly says that religious intolerance was never the fault of Protestants in Canada; but its compilers must be sadly blind to the facts of history, if they exempt from this charge the creed of Romanism, whensoever or wheresoever dominant.—The die, however, has been cast, and it is the duty of every good subject to anticipate the most favourable issue to the experiment which has been decided upon. He should hail with satisfaction any renewed proofs of its probable advantages, and dismiss, if he can, the natural forebodings of ill; for certain it is, that an inward persuasion, as a source of good conduct, according to a very common axiom in ethics, create the very line of conduct which will be most likely to effect their realization. We are, nevertheless, not very sanguine that the state of the case, as developed in the Monthly Review, will make any very great impression either way: the arguments for and against the measure, have been much more forcibly and eloquently expressed in other quarters; and the public mind, contrary to the belief of the writer or writers of those articles, has long been weary of discussion upon the probable issue of the great changes that have been resolved upon. Any fresh interposition of the Imperial Parliament, such as is by many anticipated, in the details of the Act of Union, would naturally be the signal for fresh excitement in the Provinces themselves; but neither the dull nor the flighty commentaries which may be made by Colonial writers on this act of Imperial legislation, will in the present passive condition of the measure, have any powerful or lasting influence upon the Provincial mind.

The general weariness of the pages of the Monthly Review is a good deal relieved by some spirited lines upon "The United Provinces,"—which, if not written by our valued correspondent Zadig, are a very successful imitation of his style. The article on the "Literature of a new Country," is, we should think, from the same hand, and possesses very considerable merit. It may be thought to be chargeable with a superabundance of ornament, by which the strength and liveliness of its conceptions are proportionally impaired; and we sometimes fancy we discern an inadvertent sliding into the same ideas, with too slight a variation of dress to disguise their identity. But while we acknowledge the undeniable merits of this writer, we should not omit to notice that, even in the heavier articles of the Review, there is occasionally a sunny break upon the sombre monotony of its prose; though perhaps our readers will gaze somewhat irreverently at the poetical finery which the following passage exhibits:—

"The British flag must be the symbol of the British constitution. British power must defend British institutions. The British lion would tear in pieces any degenerate Briton who might attempt to make him protect institutions hostile to his own. The British oak would bow its head for shame, if it were planted to guard and grace an alien's home."

As we have neither leisure nor inclination to enter into a disquisition upon tropes and figures, we must be

content to advise our readers to guard, as well as they may, against the fierceness of Britain's symbolic lion, and spare the blushes of her shame-stricken oak!

The monthly summary is a very tolerable condensation of some very unimportant events,—such as the manner of the reception of His Excellency the Governor General in his late tour through the Provinces; which, to the mind's eye of the writer, may be the whole of the "little world" whose scenes are worth contemplating, or whose events deserve to be recorded.—Yet upon the whole, we are not disposed to look with aught else than a kindly eye upon the Monthly Review: its future pages may be more vivid and better varied; as in every thing else, its compilers may improve with practice; and they will assuredly become more interesting, when they can cling with less intensity to one favourite theory, and learn to take in a wider compass of public events.

We owe an apology to the esteemed friend and brother who sent us some weeks ago a copy of the Rev. H. Gregory's Sermon, preached before the Convention of the Diocese of Western New York, on the 1st October last, for not sooner acknowledging a discourse so excellent and appropriate. Its title is "Holding forth the Word of Life,"—the words of the great Apostle of the Gentiles in Philippians ii. 16. All the passages in this eloquent sermon which particularly strike and please us, our limits will by no means allow us to transcribe; and therefore we must be content with citing a few as specimens of the author's style and reasoning. In a note to page 7, are some very useful remarks upon the modern abuse of the term "Catholic":—

"When will the good people of this day cease to be guilty of the egregious folly of calling the Church of Rome Catholic? Do they know that Catholic means universal? Would they say 'the Presbyterian Universal Church' or 'the Methodist Universal Church?' There is, says Dr. Barrow, in his treatise on the Pope's Supremacy, 'a strange enchantment in words; which being (although with no great colour of reason) assumed, do work on the fancies of men, especially of the weaker sort. Of these, power doth operate to itself such as great and ancient opinions; by their force sustaining and extending itself. So diverse prevalent factions did assume to themselves the name of Catholic; and the Roman Church particularly hath appropriated that word to itself, even so as to commit a bull, implying Rome and the universe to be the same place; and the perpetual canting of this term hath been one of its most effectual charms to weak people: I am a Catholic, that is, an Universal, therefore all I hold is true: this is their great argument.'"

The Book of Common Prayer used in the Episcopal Church of the United States is, as most of our readers are probably aware, with a few verbal alterations and local adaptations, the same precisely as our own. Local circumstances will render an occasional change of expression imperative, and the manners and habits of a people may justify some alteration in the use of terms; but it has often been to us a cause of regret that, in the performance of the daily service, so much should be left to the discretion of the Minister,—to make use of, or omit, as his own inclination may direct. This strikes us as a reprehensible condescension on the part of the Church to private judgment, while it cannot but seriously affect that great desideratum in public worship, an uniformity of practice. One of the inconveniences resulting from the permission of this discretionary power, is, as Mr. Gregory observes, an almost total disuse of that excellent compendium of faith, the Nicene Creed:—

"Whatever be the reason, the fact of its general disuse is observable, and, at such a time, is it not ominous? The eighth article declares that it ought to be thoroughly to be received and believed. For the sake of its noble confession of the 'very Godhead of the only begotten'—of the 'one Catholic and Apostolic Church'—and of 'one baptism for the remission of sins,' it deserves a more profitable employment than to stand silently on the leaves of the Prayer Book."

The following remarks upon the worship and Sacraments of the Church have, unhappily, too wide an application, and we trust their more general diffusion will prove correspondently useful:—

"Of the great importance of the stated, frequent, public worship of God, not only to those who engage in it, but to the community at large, as an example of piety, a rebuke of wickedness, an antidote to atheism, and a standing acknowledgment of the providence and government of the Almighty, I need not speak. The veriest worldling must allow it. But what a vast advantage is derived from it when Christians make it a lukewarm service. Clouded and dim indeed is the example of the Church in her worship, when many forsake the assembling of themselves together, except when something is expected more novel and exciting than calm and holy worship. In the ancient dispensation, the worship of Jehovah and the reading of his law—how prominent were they in the holy convocation! And how little prominent are they now, under the new and better covenant with better promises! What humiliating proofs meet us within and without the Church, that God's holy worship is counted a dull, unedifying work! 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