

The Presbyterian Witness Halifax, N. S., Jan. 13, 1855

The Immaculate Conception.

Mary has been conceived immaculate; it is the faith of the church; whoever denies it is a heretic.—Univers De Paris, Decr. 12th, 1854.

The Immaculate Conception is now a solemn article of Catholic faith. On Friday, 8th inst. Pius IX. with 200 bishops before him, promulgated that definition so long sighed for by the Universal Church. It was among the grandest days of the Church of God has seen on earth. In the eternal city—the Rome of Ages—beneath the dome of St. Peter's—the wondrous dome—the most august and greatest temple the hands of man have reared to the honour and the worship of Almighty—in the presence of cardinals, archbishops, bishops, and priests, come together, with hearts on fire, from every part of the orbis terrarum on which the sun shines, a Sovereign Pontiff—one of the most glorious that ever filled the see of Peter, with his joints people about him in tears, and the eyes of 200,000,000 of united believers turned to him, and as our Catholic readers may well believe, the whole court of heaven smiling down upon him—proclaimed a dogma that will live in the faith and in the affection of Christ's children on earth till doomsday—the dogma, that Mary, the Mother of God, was never for an instant in any way under the dominion of sin or Satan. That day, we are told, Rome was filled with joy. We know it. That day has gladdened the universe.—The Tablet, Dublin, Decr. 16th, 1854.

On that day something will take place that will sound from the heights of heaven to the depths of hell.—Bishop of Marseilles.

It is thus that the devotees of Rome delight to discourse of the latest and most audacious decree of him, whom Pascal the younger graphically calls the "great vice-God," and whom a higher authority still more aptly designates the "Man of Sin." We have heard and read of the reckless sons of villany glorying in their shame, and of raving maniacs hugging in delirious ecstasy the chains which fettered their limbs and bound them to the walls of their cells. But to see the delicious joy with which the deluded sons of the Papacy hug the chains that bind their consciences to a system of falsehood and iniquity, is by far sadder sight. For, what is the real object of this decree, and what the necessity of dogmatizing in this age of enlightened and free discussion, upon a point which is purely theoretical in its nature—which is without a shadow of Scriptural sanction—which was wholly unknown during the first centuries of the Christian era—which so many councils have discussed and left undecided, and so many Popes never ventured to settle? Is it because the doctrine is all important in itself, and necessary to salvation? Then, why has not Rome, the mother of all perfection, proclaimed it long ere now? It is not that the Pope or his crafty cardinals care aught for the truth of the doctrine, or the honour of Mary. No; the explanation of the matter is found in the fact, that, of late years, the spirit of inquiry and freedom of thought have been making alarming progress among certain classes of Roman Catholics, and fast as this spirit increased the influence of Rome decreased. It was absolutely necessary to the safety of Popery to stifle this spirit. The Pope, the Bishop, the priest, must still be lords of the conscience. But how shall it be accomplished? By what cup shall he victims be next made drunken? The Mass, Purgatory, Auricular Confession, and Indulgences, are losing their power. Something further must be tried. Mary—the "Queen of Heaven"—must receive divine honours. She must be declared to have been not only without actual transgression since she became the "Mother of God," but she must also be declared to have been born, and even conceived, without original sin; and all this must be so because the Pope declares it to be so. A few weeks since, the Immaculate Conception of the Virgin was an idle speculation, which good Papists might believe or not, just as they listed. But Pius IX. lifts up his voice—his Holiness as God's Vicergerent upon earth pronounces a decree, and lo! how mighty the change. That which, not many weeks ago, was but a matter of mere speculation, is now infallible truth, guarded by anathemas—a doctrine which no man may disbelieve on peril of his salvation. And all this is so, just because Rome says it. The Pope, and under him, the priest, stands in the place of God, and whatever he says is true, whatever he commands is to be obeyed. This is the grand solution of the object of the present decree. Let the Roman Catholic laity give their assent to this, and there shall not remain to them a thought, a volition, or an affection, which they can any longer call their own. Their moral and intellectual slavery shall have been complete. It was to complete this spiritual subjugation that all the gorgeous ceremonies of the 8th of December have taken place,—that the Virgin was decreed new

honour, that the Madonna was crowned, that Cardinal ... at a solemn ... at a solemn ... of the capitol ... that, by express command of His Holiness, for five days previous to the pronouncing of the decree, the relics of the holy face, the lance that pierced the Saviour's side, the material cross, the inscription on the cross, the cradle in which the infant Jesus slept, and the chains of St. Peter, were exhibited to the veneration of the Faithful. But, what are all these puerilities of relic-worship? What all these pomp and outward show? What these new impostures and sorceries with which Rome strives anew to bewitch the nations? It is a solemn declaration that God is not in her. That from beginning to end she is one gigantic system of imposture. That her destruction draweth nigh. That the cup of her iniquity is all but full.

Revival in a Female Seminary.

Is there not something peculiarly encouraging in the number of revivals which have of late taken place in the Colleges and Female Seminaries of America? Does it not betoken the beginning of better and more glorious days?—Times of refreshing from the presence of the Lord! And should not these hopeful tokens be the means of stirring us up to tenfold earnestness in prayer for a gracious outpouring of the Holy Spirit upon our sadly withered churches?

The following is from the Washington correspondent of the Philadelphia Presbyterian:— "I wish that I could tell you of revivals of religion in our midst—a general outpouring of the Spirit upon our churches here. But such is not the case, we are sometimes cheered by tokens for good which the Lord of the harvest gives us—but there is no great ingathering of souls. There has been an exceedingly interesting state of things in a female seminary not very distant from us. It is located in Virginia. Some weeks since great seriousness upon the subject of religion was manifested by several of the young ladies connected with the school. Under the judicious management of the ladies who have charge of the school, together with aid from neighbouring ministers, the revival has progressed until only six impatient are left out of some forty-five or forty-six. Of that number only three or four of them were pious when they entered the school. This truly is a wonderful and glorious work. Who can tell its results? So many young ladies going forth into the world with cultivated minds, and hearts sanctified by the grace of God, will make their influence felt. O, that all our seminaries of learning, male and female, could be thus blessed!"

Mechanics' Institute.

HON. MR. HOWE'S LECTURES.—This gentleman on Wednesday evening last finished his course of lectures on the Early Settlement of Nova Scotia by the British. The first lecture was general, commencing with the discovery of this Continent, and detailed the various skirmishes and wars that took place amongst the first settlers, arising less or more from the disturbances that prevailed in Europe at the time, which disturbances were briefly traced by the lecturer. The second lecture presented an outline of the first settlement of the Western counties, the general character of the settlers, with many interesting incidents respecting more prominent individuals. The lecture on Wednesday evening last took upon the Eastern counties, along with Cape Breton, and specially detailed the arrival of the forces of Cornwallis in the Harbours, with all the interesting transactions connected with the early history of Halifax. These lectures were strikingly graphic, and so interspersed with amusing anecdote, that they were oftentimes intensely interesting. They were, of course, but sketches, but on this account they were to us all the more valuable, inasmuch as they thereby afforded once and again full scope to the lively fancy and high imaginative genius of the lecturer.— Mr. Howe recommended some one of the more youthful of his auditors to take up his theme and fill up the gaps; stating that his grand design was to show how ample were the materials at his service. But why should not Mr. Howe himself be induced to fill up these outlines. We know none more competent for the task. Let him take for his subject "The Past and the Present of Nova Scotia," and we augur a ready and extensive sale.

THE PATRIOTIC FUND.

We are happy to see the efforts that are being made in this community and throughout the Province for the support of the widows and orphans of the brave defenders of our country. Gratitude, benevolence, and pure patriotism should move us to give liberally to such an object, for it is not merely the battle of Turkey, of France, or of Britain, that these noble men are fighting; they fight our battle—the battle of Freedom and of right—that of all mankind. The fact, too, that many of the bereaved widows are natives of this Province, should be a further inducement to give to this cause. The Bazaar held at Masonic Hall on Tuesday and Wednesday realized something over £800. This, however, is but on earnest of what our spirited citizens are about to do. A numerous signed requisition for calling a public meeting in reference to this subject was presented to His Worship the Mayor, to which he responded by calling a meeting on Monday next, at 2 o'clock, p. m. The contributors on the occasion will, we have no doubt, be worthy of the enlightened philanthropy for which the citizens of Halifax are so noted. Substantial proofs, such as will then be called for, will test our patriotism more than the most eloquent of speeches or the brilliant invectives against the "Tyrant of the North". Pictou and Lunenburg have already moved in the matter, and from the miners of Sydney, C.B., the Provincial Secretary has received the handsome sum of £148 3s. 9d.

Our spirited neighbors in New Brunswick are also alive to this object. The Albion Lodge, No. 570, of Freemasons, unanimously resolved to forward to England, in aid of the Patriotic Fund, the very handsome sum of £50 sterling. The York Division of the Sons of Temperance, Fredericton, have voted £20 for the same object. In St. John's also, an effort is being made by the Temperance body to raise a large sum for the same purpose. A grand Tea Soiree is to be held under the auspices of the several Divisions of the City, for which one thousand tickets at one dollar each, are expected to be sold.—The proceeds are to be added to the Patriotic Fund.

Provincial Appointment.

The Royal Gazette of Wednesday contains the announcement that His Excellency the Lieutenant Governor in Council has been pleased to appoint the Rev. A. FORRESTER, of Chalmers' Church, Superintendent of Education and Principal of the Normal Seminary.

Dr. Duff.—The Home and Foreign Record of the Free Church of Scotland, states that Dr. Duff continues to improve in strength since his retirement to the south of France.

LITERATURE.

THE MODERN CRUSADE, or the present Russian War; its Cause, its Termination, and its Results, viewed in connection with Scripture Prophecy. By Rev. William Wilson, Wesleyan Missionary. Second Thousand. Halifax: Wesleyan Book Room. St. John, N. B.: A. & J. McMillan.

This little volume, we have no hesitation in saying, contains an admirable exposition of the prophecy concerning "Gog, the chief prince of Meshech and Tubal", recorded in the 38th and 39th chapters of the book of the prophet Ezekiel. The author, as the title of the book indicates, applies this remarkable prophecy to the present war with Russia. And if he has failed in some of the more minute details, he certainly, upon the whole, makes out a strong case. The work indicates considerable learning and research, independent thinking combined with true modesty. We have read this book with extreme pleasure and much instruction. It is peculiarly a "book for the times", and we would say to every one of our readers—procure the book, read it with care, and, by a few hours' reading, your stock of knowledge upon the great topic of the day will be vastly increased. We would gladly quote for the benefit of our readers, could we do so without doing injustice to our author.— There is such a necessary connection between all the parts, that short extracts would appear to disadvantage.

NATURAL AND INDUSTRIAL RESOURCES OF NOVA SCOTIA.

An Essay written for the Industrial Exhibition. Halifax: Printed by J. Bowes & Sons.

This is an essay in the original and literal sense of the word, i. e., it is an attempt—and we are glad to say a very praiseworthy one. The writer is evidently pretty well versed in the subjects of which he treats; but we are inclined to think that he is not well versed in the best style of treating subjects; for in a literary point of view, the essay is a little curiosity. We hope that, if this essay will have any successors from the same pen (the writer intimates his intention of publishing a series), the successors will be free from glaring and ludicrous grammatical blunders. The price of the essay is only 4d., and we assure our readers, as a mere curiosity it is worth four times four pence.

OUR DOORS AT IDEL-WILD.

By N. P. Willis. New York: C. Scribner.—Halifax: E. G. Fuller.

This is a very airy, sketchy, readable volume, made up of Willis' contributions for some time past to the Home Journal. Willis is certainly a lover of nature; and frequently describes her with a truthfulness of appreciation, and a correctness of taste, that does one's heart good in these days of stilted romances and "earnest" novel writers. We cannot agree with those who think that Willis ought to have written an enduring book. The man knew himself too well to attempt such a thing. He has already made himself comparatively useful in his generation; he earned an honest livelihood; his contemporaries know him, and generally speaking, love him;—this is the acme of his ambition. Both his prose and poetry are tissued by this determination, he does not expect that they will long outlive himself; and this, to our way of thinking, should ensure him a kindly mention when hundreds of epithet seeking, noisy, self-styled prophets of "Improvement," who clamourously claim immortality for their maudlin lucubrations, shall be justly forgotten.

HUMANITY IN THE CITY.

By the Rev. E. H. Chapin. New York: De Witt & Davenport. Halifax: E. G. Fuller.

This is a well written book. The prevailing evils and follies of the age are graphically depicted, and the lessons of morality, sobriety, and philanthropy, are faithfully and eloquently enforced. But the grand Regenerator and Renovator of "Humanity", in the city or elsewhere, is kept sadly in the background. It is really a phenomenon to find a volume of discourses delivered on Sabbath evenings by a preacher of the Gospel—with scarcely an allusion to the grand theme of the Gospel. The book, however, ranks high in its class, and contains much that is valuable and instructive.— Its fault is of a negative character. The peculiar doctrines of the author's own denomination are never obtruded upon us, and only for the want—indicated above—his work might pass for that of a good and earnest evangelical preacher. The

not all pledged to the same discipline? ... sounds they differ, or think ... But whatever ... may be, they cannot ... at least by ... talked so

pages of Tracts. These, so called tracts, embrace frequently valuable treatises, such as De Samuel Miller on Presbyterianism, and on Infant Baptism; Drs. William Symington and J. J. Janeway on the Atonement; Newman Hall's Come to Jesus; Ryle's Cross of Christ, and Do you Pray; Sacrifice of Mass, by Henry Cooke, D.D., L.L.D.; many of the smaller works of McChesney, Dr. James Hamilton, Robert Hall, President Edwards, the Alexanders of Princeton, Dr. Doddridge; in short, the choicest productions of all the great and good, whether living or departed, without respect of creed or country. From what I have already witnessed as to the kind of places in which our own colporteur has introduced these valuable works, I can well understand the Report when it intimates that, in their distribution, the colporteurs have encountered "Unitarians and Universalists, Magians and Socinians, Deists and Infidels, as well as less pernicious errorists." The families visited, of whom very many were conversed and prayed with, was 68, and 1,800 families less than 2,210 Presbyterian families were found without the Confession of Faith, and 1,800 families of different denominations without any religious book except the Bible. Of course, the two last mentioned are a proof that the families in question, destitute of pastoral instruction.—state of things thus disclosed forms a state of things that is a great want.

The sale of books within the bounds of the Presbytery of St. Stephen has far surpassed expectations. Indeed, it is a most interesting sight to drive out to the colporteur's headquarters on one of these winter evenings, and to observe the eager through by which he is found to be surrounded. His large box has been opened; his books have been strewn around the table. There are Calvin's Institutes; and McCre's Life of Knox; there are Owen on Justification, and Charnock on Regeneration; there is a most tempting edition of the Pilgrim's Progress, and here are the choicest works of Baxter, Henry, and Doddridge. There also are the British Reformers from Wickliff and Binney to Fox and Coverdale. There is "Seila Ada," the Jewish convert, with a portrait, which will certainly sell the book, as may be seen by looking at the admiring faces of the spectators, not that one of the most saleable books in the whole collection, and the most absorbing story amongst them, needs any such recommendation. If the resources of our book-loving visitors were equal to their wishes, the colporteur would speedily be relieved of his precious collection; as it is, two, and three, and four, and up to eight dollars worth, have been borne away by single individuals. Children's books have a great run, for if one little boy or girl has obtained the "Children of the Bible," or "Little Mary," or "Sarah Lee and Susan Gray," why should not all their little neighbours have these books also, whether the prices be forthcoming or not? Blessings manifold be on them all, the Board, the books, the colporteur, the buyers, and the children!

Our Presbytery will nominate additional colporteurs so soon as suitable men can be found, and on the nomination being forwarded to Mr. Winthrop Sargent, 265 Chesnut Street, Philadelphia, he will send forward a commission for six months, and a stock of books; or he will send the stock, which may be ordered by means of the printed catalogues. I believe there is abundant field for three or four colporteurs within the bounds of each of our three Presbyteries, not to mention the want of our brethren of the Reformed Presbyterian Church, of the Established Church of Scotland, and of the Presbyterian Church of Nova Scotia. The salary allowed is at the rate of 200 dollars per year, including in this sum, however, 50 dollars for outfit. The Board pays all necessary expenses. In a letter to the writer the superintendent of the department says, "We consider it indispensable that the colporteurs should be pious men, and very desirable that they should be Presbyterians. But the glory of our Lord Jesus Christ, and the extension of his kingdom, should be his predominant desire." Nothing, indeed, is more praise-worthy than the catholicity of the Board, as may be seen in the works it has selected from every evangelical denomination, and as evinced in the above extract. But herein it only exemplifies the catholicity of Presbyterianism, as taught in the Westminster Standards, and as ever exemplified by all genuine Presbyterians.

New Brunswick Correspondence.

PRESBYTERIAN BOARD OF PUBLICATION, &c.

The sixteenth Annual Report of this noble Institution; its "Principles and Plans," its "Alphabetical and Descriptive Catalogues," its Almanac for 1855, replete with Presbyterian and general denominational statistics; and not a few of its Books, Pamphlets, and Tracts, are before and around me. A statement of some of the facts which they contain will, I doubt not, suggest some important practical ideas. In particular, I trust it may lead to an effort on the part of the Presbyterians, and friends of Evangelical Christianity in these Lower Provinces, to put themselves into a position to reap the advantages which the Board is ready to confer; to accept the gifts which it so generously offers; and to aid in accomplishing the beneficial results which are the grand end of its organization.

During the past year the Board had 131 Colporteurs in commission, of whom one was in India, one hundred and forty-four in the United States, and only six in the British Provinces, five of them being in Nova Scotia and one in Canada West. The appointment of a colporteur by the Presbytery of St. Stephen was subsequent to the publication of the Report. It is hoped, however, that by the time the next Report shall have been presented, there may be as many Agents reported from New Brunswick alone as are at present found in all the Lower Provinces. There is abundant room for them all; a hearty welcome will be given by the people; and sufficient inducement offered by the Board, especially to those whose hearts are in the work, and whose love of Christ constrains them.

During the past year the Board distributed 135,985 volumes, of which 16,098 volumes were donations. It also, by the same colporteurage, distributed gratuitously 1,300,847

Though last, not least, "THE PRESBYTERIAN," as preliminary arrangements, is doing well. We have just got a list of twenty subscribers, and paid for, from a quarter in which I only expected five or six. X.