

THE CHURCH OF ENGLAND.

[As the effect of the Reform in Parliament upon the Church of England, is a subject of considerable importance in the Colonies, we copy the following View of Public Affairs, from the London Christian Observer.]

WE pass over the Foreign Intelligence of the month—such as the still unsettled state of Belgium; the dissolution of the French Chambers; the quelling of the popular effervescence in Italy by the Austrian armies, and the important successes of the Poles over the Russians, a prelude, we would trust, to the expulsion of the invader, and the rescue of Poland from an unjust and tyrannical foreign yoke—to address ourselves to that which constitutes the most important subject of anxious thought at the present moment, the extraordinary state of our own beloved country.

Our remarks shall, however, be few; for though we have intended to redeem our pledge of examining what appeared to us the prominent aspects of the Reform Bill, in reference to its probable moral and religious bearings—(topics eminently important, but too little heeded within the walls of Parliament)—we shall be able to find a more calm and seasonable occasion for such an inquiry than the present crisis of feverish excitement, which every Christian, every lover of his country, would wish rather to allay than to foment. It appears to us that both the friends of this measure and its opponents are justly censurable for the spirit in which we speak of course of the more warm partisans on either side—they have conducted their warfare; and it is well if the result is not to alienate the minds of the people from public men of all classes, and to lead them to view politics as a mere party trade for selfish interests, and not for the national welfare. We know not whether most to blame—the unblushing advocacy of bribery, corruption, and the whole profligate and venal system of what is called “boroughmongering;” or those inflammatory appeals to popular passions, just to gain this question, which have set the whole nation in a ferment and opened a way, we fear, to future demands, which cannot, and ought not to be, complied with. The newspapers have been encouraged to minister daily aliment to a depraved appetite. Nothing has been heard of but jobs, sinecures, enormous salaries, and over-taxation; till the multitude have been maddened into political reformers; buoyed up with the delusive hope that nothing is wanting but a repeal of these grievances to render us all wise, virtuous, wealthy, and happy. There has been lamentably, too much of such hollow, paltry trickery on both sides, and we fear that all will hereafter suffer for it; from the feelings of popular odium and contempt which have been generated in regard to our Houses of Parliament, Lords as well as Commons, and to all our public institutions; destroying that honest, manly confidence, which is no feeble guarantee for public honour and good conduct.

The immediate cause of the abandonment of the Reform Bill by Government, which was followed by the dissolution of Parliament, was the majority (two hundred ninety-nine to two hundred ninety-one) gained by the Opposition, on General Gascoyne's proposition, that it was not expedient to diminish the number of members for England and Wales—thus damaging the bill beyond reparation, which was followed by another majority against Ministers for an adjournment of the House on a night when a portion of the supplies was to have been voted. The King, to shew his determination to support his Ministers and the Reform Bill, prorogued Parliament in person, delivering a speech expressive of his determination to appeal to the country. That he had a constitutional right to act thus, is by none denied; and as little can it be doubted, that, as Ministers had pledged themselves to stand or fall by the measure, they could not, after all that had occurred, do otherwise than advise his Majesty to exercise his prerogative. The Opposition did not seem to have been fully prepared for this alternative. It had been currently reported that the King had been induced to waver; and Ministers also, it was said, would be constrained to make many important concessions in the details of the Bill, rather than risk a dissolution. But the die was cast: it was clear that the Bill, in any thing like its present form, could not be got through Parliament, and Ministers determined to throw themselves upon the country. The result remains to be seen. If measured by popular feeling, their majority in the new elections would be very large; but as much of the main strength of the House of Commons lies at present in the hands of the very persons who are most interested in opposing the projected measure, powerful efforts will be made to diminish it. There seems, however, little reason to doubt that Government will, upon the whole, gain such a majority as will send their Bill to take its trial with some strength in the House of Lords. Should it stop there, with the King, the Commons, and the numerical majority of the public in its favour, the results might be very serious.

We forbear, as before stated, entering at present upon the merits or demerits of the Bill; but we must offer a few words in reply to some of our correspondents, who have put the question to us, How would a Reformed Parliament affect the interests of the Established Church? We should have less hesitation in offering in reply the most favourable opinion, if the Established Church were in that state of spiritual efficiency which would command to a due extent, the affections and suffrages of the people: But this is at present deplorably not the case; and much of the evil, we must honestly add, has arisen from a corrupt state of Parliament. Take only, as an illustration, the distribution of patronage: On whom have government livings and posts of ecclesiastical dignity and emolument been currently bestowed? Not by any means of necessity on the worthiest candidates, but on those who possessed the strongest parliamentary interest: It is true that many excellent men have been thus promoted, but their excellence was not their direct claim; professional decency of character might usually be requisite, for the sake of public opinion, but beyond that, nothing was required: it was not asked whether the individual was a man of God; one who had determined to know nothing among men but Jesus Christ and him crucified, and to spend and be spent for the souls of his people. Pluralities and non-residence, also, have been nourished by the corruptions of Parliament; for a legislature honestly anxious for the public welfare (even supposing its members not religious) would not have allowed, for the sake of cumulating preferments, that wretched system, which degrades and disgraces the Church. But the venal interest that made and kept Parliament corrupt, found one of its richest returns in Church patronage; for it was hard indeed, if a man who could oblige Govern-

ment could not provide for a clerical friend beyond the worth of a single benefice incumbered with residence. These abuses have well-nigh ruined the Church in popular estimation; and one such instance as that which has been retailed for the last few weeks, of the rapacity of the Bishop of Ely (we see not why we should not allude to the name, as it has been before Parliament,) does more to injure the Church in the public feeling as an engine of spiritual utility, and to prepare the way for the confiscation of its temporary revenues, than the worst Parliamentary Reform Bill that its greatest enemy could devise.

Our view, then, is, that under a Reformed Parliament the administration of our national ecclesiastical establishment will undergo a severe ordeal, but that the issue will be, if the clergy are faithful to their high trust, to make it more popular, more spiritual, and more useful. It may come to be less looked to as a sinecure provision for young men who have no taste for its duties; but we think too highly of the claims of our church, and its powerful hold upon the best affections of the country, to fear that a Parliament chosen by the large majority of respectable householders would wish for more than its rectification, or would plot its extinction. If it did, it would be the clergy themselves who were chiefly to blame, for wherever there is a pious, zealous, and affectionate pastor, the Church, we are persuaded, is in no danger: rather do the people wish to build new Churches and provide for additional ministers where wanted, and they are greatly alienated from the national communion by not being allowed to do so: The people ask to have a pious, active, resident, fairly-paid clergyman in every parish; but such a system would ruin the expectations of those who view the Church only as an instrument of lucre. Beyond this, we see no direct danger except (and a fearful exception it is!) what springs from the temper of the times, whatever may be the system of Government or Parliament,—and from the effect of those abuses in the Church which have alienated many of the people, and rendered them open to the arts of political declaimers and interested impugnors of tithes. But this danger would be increased, not lessened, by a continuance, instead of a correction, of the existing evils; and, to speak the plain truth, we should less dread open opposition than the interested support which views religion only as an instrument of temporal advantage. If you do away with the Borough-influence system, it is said, and give large bodies of the public a voice, you will ruin the Church,—for it stands by private influence. Its clerical and impropriated tithes being bound up together, the efforts of those who hold the latter, are exerted in favour of the former, and the better payment of the Church can offer by sinecures add cumulation for the exertion of political power, the more sure is it to retain that power in its favour. In all this not one word is said of religion,—of the unthought affections of the public,—of that power which the Church ought to possess, as a spiritual blessing to the country, and this is, in our view, a far stronger safeguard than that interested support which thinks only of loaves and fishes, and nothing of the souls of men.

LITERATURE, &c.

FROM THE ROYAL LADY'S MAGAZINE.

“I'M NOT A LOVER NOW.”

I CANNOT talk as once I could,
Of sunshine, sighs, and tears;
The music of the mountain flood
Is discord to my ears.
I cannot sit and “bask the moon,”
With night-dews on my brow,
I am not such a simple loon—
“I'M NOT A LOVER NOW.”

I cannot dine on balmy air,
I cannot sup on sighs,
I cannot drink the dew-drops fair,
That fall from Flora's eyes.
All that, no doubt, is very fine;
I thought so once, but now
I'd rather have a pint of wine—
“I'M NOT A LOVER NOW.”

I've bask'd in beauty's beaming smile,
I've felt love's scorching flame,
I've raved in Moore and Byron's style,
To many a youthful dame.
I once went mad for Lady G.,
It made a horrid row,
I was a stupid ass.—N. B.
“I'M NOT A LOVER NOW.”

I've often made a thousand vows
Of constancy and truth;
I once was nearly made a spouse,
But proved a fickle youth.
I used to sing “The light guitar,”
I have forgotten how;
And now I chant, “What fools men are”
“I'M NOT A LOVER NOW.”

I've often told a thousand lies,
I've vow'd grey eyes were blue,—
I've sworn this earth was paradise,
And that my heart was true.
I have forgot these youthful tricks,
And it is time, I vow,
I was last month just twenty-six!—
“I'M NOT A LOVER NOW.”

AN ISLAND OF ICE.—“A fresh breeze came sharply from the North, and so cold, that the sailors said it must be blowing from an iceberg. We saw nothing, although the moon was high, but, at midnight, one of the men described a brightening along the northern horizon, which left no doubt of the fact. At last, the brightness began to assume outline and features, and the wind rose as piercingly and rude as December, while the enormous mountainous mass was evidently nearing. By its apparent extent, the captain conjectured we should pass to the windward of it without difficulty,—but as it came nearer and nearer, the feeling of danger mingled with the chillness of the wind, and we beheld with awe and astonishment many streams of beautiful water leaping and tumbling from the cliffs and peaks, as it drifted in the sunshine towards us. The wind, as the iceberg approached, slackened, and we saw with the telescope, on a point that projected from the side, a huge white bear couchant, which, the sailors said, was watching for fish. No sight could be more solemnly impressive than the evidently advancing mass, at last it came so near that we feared it would be impossible to escape.

“The vast peaks, cliffs, and pinnacles were like a gorgeous city, with all its temples and palaces, shuddering, as if shaken by an earthquake. The waters dashed from terrace to terrace, and every point and spire was glittering and gleaming with countless flames kindled by the sunshine. Terror confounded every one on board.—A huge mass, which projected far aloft, and almost already over the ship, was seen to tremble,—and, with a crash louder than thunder, it fell into the sea. The whole dreadful continent, for such it seemed, visibly shook. The peaks and mountains were shattered with indescribable crashing, as, with a sound so mighty that it cannot be named, it sunken as if several islands had separated,—and we saw through the dreadful chasm a ship under full sail beyond, coasting the weather side.—Still the different masses floated in view, and all day long we had our eyes fixed upon them, as they appeared to recede—fearful that another variation of the wind would bring them again upon us.”—From *Boble Corbet*, by Galt.

We are—all of us—attached to our institutions in church and state—and believe that, as the best of them are well-built with durable materials on a foundation of rock, they will stand secure in their time-honoured strength against all enemies. But we care not—except as antiquaries—about old rubbish; and in many cases would lend a helping hand, shovels, and wheelbarrows, for its removal to some more appropriate place than the outer court of a temple, not to say its inner shrine. But we would hesitate to send in workmen, even from a mechanics' institution, to make havoc with axes and hammers of its carved work—or even after the decay wrought by the tooth of time among its ancient devices, to trust them with the work of renovation. It is easier to innovate than to renovate—to alter than to restore. We confess we love the ancient—in towers—in trees—in charters—and in acts. Old towers we would repair—old tress on no account transplant—old charters reverence—and old acts eternize—save and except only towers tottering to their fall, and these we would assist gently down to the dust—trees too damp in the hollow interior of their rottenness even for owls, and these we would hew down for fire—charters of which the letters are alive but the spirit dead, and these we would allow in their chests a peaceful oblivion—acts obsolete, because gone or changed the times which gave them power, and these we would with little reluctance erase when we saw that they would not wisely be renewed—and were “good people all of every sort” of our way of feeling, and thinking, and acting, what a World after the Flood would this appear—how strong and beautiful by land and sea!—*Blackwood*.

SKETCH OF A SHOPKEEPER OF THE OLD SCHOOL.

“Mr. Bryant was a neat, quiet, orderly sort of man, regular as clock-work, and steady as time, the very pink of punctuality, and the essence of exactness. He had been in business nearly forty years, in the same shop conducted precisely in the same style, as in the days of its predecessors; he lacked not store of clothes of change of wigs; but his clothes, and wigs, and three-cornered hats, were so like each other, that they seemed, as it were, part of himself. His wig was brown—so were his coat and waistcoat, which were nearly of equal length. He wore short black breeches with paste buckles, speckled worsted hose, and very large shoes with very large silver buckles. He was most intensely and entirely a citizen. He loved the city with an undivided attachment. He loved the sound of its bells, and the noise of its carts and coaches; he loved the colour of its mud and the canopy of its smoke; he loved its November fogs, and enjoyed the music of its street musicians, and its itinerant merchants; he loved all its institutions, civil and religious: he thought there was wisdom in them, if there was wisdom in nothing else; he loved the church, and he loved the steeple, and the parson who did the duty, and the parson who did not do the duty; and he loved the clerk, and the sexton,