# THE COVENTRY HERALD & OBSERVER. AND GENERAL ADVERTISER FOR THE MIDLAND COUNTIES. No. 2,010. Friday, October 30, 1846.

THE LITERARY AND SCIENTIFIC REVIEW of the COVENTRY HERALD. [Magazines and Works intended for Review, are requested to be sent to Mr.C. Mitchell, Red Lion-court, Fleet-street.] THE JESUITS. By MM. Michelet and Quinet. MICHELET'S PRIESTS, WOMEN, AND FAMILIES. CHRISTIANITY IN ITS VARIOUS AFFECTS, FROM THE BIRTH OF CHRIST TO THE FRENCH REVOLUTION. Translated by C. Cocks. (Longmans, 1816.) These publications are three of a series of translations from contemporary French authors, which, on the whole, form a not unwelcome addition to our rapidly increasing stock of cheap literature. It is true that a translation can never be more than a second best vehicle for an author's thoughts, and the more abundant his excellencies, the more does he suffer from this method of presentation, - the finer the nectar, the greater the risk in transferring it from one vessel to another. But an acquaintance with foreign modes of thought, especially on the grander questions which occupy the human mind, is too important an element in the true enlightenment of a nation, to be dispensed with until all English readers shall have faculties or leisure to become linguists. These remarks apply very forcibly to the works before us. The authors suffer perhaps more than in the average degree from the translating process; but notwithstanding this disadvantage, it is well that ordinary readers should have the means of knowing what writers so influential in their own country have to say on subjects of universal interest. Still, though we can thus approve the introduction of these works to the English public, they are far from obtaining our unqualified admiration. While they exhibit much fervid eloquence, expansiveness of view, and ardour for human liberty and human progress, they are too vague and allusive to be very rich in instruction to persons less informed than their authors, and they have the fault, perhaps inevitable to works of an antagonistic character, of putting statements too broadly, and painting facts in too strong lights and shadows. Moreover, all the philosophy of the writers has not delivered them from an almost ridiculous excess of amour de la patria, which leads them to represent the French people as a sort of second chosen race, who alone have the mission to propagate, by pen and sword, the truth which is to regenerate the nations. But national egotism is the last foible on which we English must allow ourselves to be severe. Whatever may be the reception of the above works amongst us, the friends of Jesuitism have done them the honour of showing the most vehement indignation and alarm at their tendency, while, on the other hand, their authors have been warmly supported by those who think that France and Christendom in general have reason to regret the revival of the Society of Jesus in 1814. MM. Michelet and Quinet are, as they are fond of telling their readers, brothers not only in office, but in opinion, sharing the same views so intimately and completely, that whenever the one speaks or writes, he knows himself to be expressing the mind of the other; and one of the works before us, "The Jesuits," is a visible sign of this unity, being the joint production of the two friends. It consists of two series of lectures, - the first, by M. Michelet, too declamatory and general to be suited for anything but a viva voce delivery, to an audience who shared in the excitement that produced "long interruption" of the speaker, by "applause, murmurs, and violent language." The second course, by M. Quinet, is of more intrinsic value, containing a rapid and well-marked sketch of the origin and fortunes of the Society of Jesus, the nature of its discipline and constitution, its missions, political agency, and relation to theology and philosophy. With a candid acknowledgment of the true genius and enthusiasm which gave birth to the idea of the Society in the mind of its founder, of the pure earnestness and simple faith which carried a Xavier from India to Japan, and from thence to the shores of China, compelling from the inhabitants of those strange lands the tribute of veneration for him as a holy man, - M. Quinet shows that the system of Loyola runs counter to the grand law which God has impressed on all nature. - the production and development of life; that wherever it presides there must be moral, social, and intellectual death; its first aim being to annihilate in its agents, and consequently in those on whom they act, all spontaneity, all will. Let man become as a corpse, ut cadaver, were the death-bed words of Loyola - let him be as a staff in the hand of an old man, senis bacillus, which is taken up and cast away again at pleasure; and one of the rules in his Spiritual Exercises is equally startling: "If authority declares that what seems to you white is black, affirm it to be black." Michelet's "Priests, Women, and Families," is more special in its object, and much more likely to be extensively read. The author selects from history and biography samples of the effects of religious direction, by which he means a spiritual superintendence over individuals of a closer and more rigid character than that of the confessor. He gives some melancholy proofs of the too undeniable fact, that women have ever been the victims and the instruments of priestly despotism, and in the latter part of the work he dilates especially on the baneful influence of the director on the peace of domestic life. There is certainly much truth very eloquently stated in the form both of facts and principles in this work of Michelet's; but we confess that to us, loving, as we do, to dwell in the serene atmosphere of admiration for mankind, its perusal has been exquisitely painful, and with all deference to the author's experience and judgement, we advise his readers to bear in mind, that there is a large amount of truth to be urged in vindication of the defendant, which Michelet, as counsel for the other party, is not to be expected to state. We have not space for many quotations, but we give the following as rather a happy illustration of the power of habit: - "I read once in an old story what is really affecting, and very significant. It was about a woman, a wandering princess, who, after many sufferings, found for her asylum a deserted palace, in the midst of a forest. She felt happy in reposing there, and remaining some time: she went to and fro from one large empty room to another, with our meeting with any obstacle; she thought herself alone and free. All the doors were open; only at the hall-door, no one having passed through since herself, the spider had woven his web in the sun, a thin, light, and almost invisible net-work; a feeble obstacle, which the princess, who wishes at last to go out, thinks she can remove without difficulty. She raises the web; but there is another behind it, which she also raises without trouble. The second conceals a third; that she must also raise, - strange! there are four; no, five! or rather, six, - and more beyond. Alas! how will she get rid of so many? She is already tired. No matter! she perseveres; by taking breath a little she may continue. But the web continues too, and is ever renewed with a malicious obstinacy. What is she to do? She is overcome with fatigue and perspiration, her arms fall by her sides. At last, exhausted as she is, she sits down on the ground, on that insurmountable threshold; she looks mournfully at the aerial obstacle fluttering in the wind, lightly and triumphantly. Poor princess! poor fly! now you are caught! But why did you stay in that fairy dwelling, and give the spider time to spin his web?" Too much credit cannot be given to Messrs. Longmans and Co., for the style in which these publications are got up. As regards paper, type, and form, we think them superior to any cheap issue of popular literature that has hitherto appeared, and we trust that the spirited publishers will follow up their praiseworthy commencement in this department of the public service.