

THE MONTH.

THE principal topic has, of course, been the duty of England to Uganda. This matter will be found fully discussed in one of the papers in this number of THE CHURCHMAN. Public opinion continues to grow on the subject. A considerable number of the Bishops and various public bodies have spoken out strongly on the question.

We call attention to the appeal of the London Diocesan Board of Education, for the Poor Schools' Relief Fund. The requirements of the Education Department and of public opinion constantly tend to increase, and it is desired now to put all the schools that need it in a thorough state of efficiency and repair. £50,000 is required for this. It is hoped that half this sum may be raised locally, while the other must come from the wealth of the Church at large.

The Church Association has issued a document which is intended to indicate its future policy. There is much in this document with which we may heartily sympathize; but there appear to be some mistakes which may have an unfortunate tendency. The alternative of Disestablishment and Disendowment in case they are not able to secure the reforms which they desire is hardly statesmanlike, and is too much like leaning on the secular arm. The attempt to abolish the episcopal veto would be strongly resented by the great bulk of moderate men in the Church, who desire to see less litigation and more persuasion. The idea of giving power to any incumbent or any churchwarden to remove ornaments illegally introduced would surely give rise to perpetual squabbles, as it is often a difficult matter to say what has been illegally placed in the church. On the other hand, a large number of sensible persons would be glad to see imprisonment for offences in doctrine and ritual abolished; and in cases of persistence, deprivation, if properly safe-guarded, seems to be the right issue. The increase of lay influence in the Church is strictly according to primitive custom, though the precise manner in which this is to be secured may not yet be perfectly clear. The effort to provide an increase in the number of Evangelical members of Convocation and of Ruri-Decanal Conferences is already desired by all who wish to see Convocation a really representative body; and it is satisfactory to find the Church Association turning its attention to the important subject of reform of that Assembly. The emphasis which they give to the importance of the House of Laymen which already exists, is also a matter of promise. It must be remembered, also, that as long as the Church is Established, no material change of any kind can take place without the consent of the Lords, the Commons and the Crown. It is well known that some of the most learned and best authorities in the Church strongly hold that canon law which is purely pontifical or papal has no validity except among Roman Catholics.

The desire to strengthen the colleges and halls where candidates for orders are trained in Evangelical principles will be heartily approved by all who do not wish to see the Church of one particular complexion. It is very surprising indeed that there should not be

more. Evangelical middle-class schools for boys and girls. The prizes, classes, lectures, and colportage suggested would be exceedingly useful, if the subjects and matter were chosen with wisdom and moderation. It is also very important that there should be on the Evangelical side of the Church persons well trained in the ritual controversy which has now, unfortunately, become so prominent. It is perfectly just, also, and right, in these days of divided opinions, to see that all Diocesan Inspectors are fair to Evangelical principles. With regard to mission work, it would probably be very wise of the Bishops to encourage what the Church Association proposes, *i.e.*, that in parishes where ritualism and sacerdotalism prevail in the church and a considerable portion of the parishioners have no redress, there should be mission-rooms or chapels-of-ease, where laymen might be authorized to minister in all matters except the sacraments. The systematic study of the first three centuries of Church history would be productive of unmixed good. We confess that petitions to Parliament from parishes affected by ritualism appear to us again to be leaning too much on the secular power; but clearly it is within the right of every parishioner. The return of Evangelical candidates to Parliament and the formation of an Evangelical party, is a point which can be viewed in different lights. It savours in some degree of party spirit, and, unfortunately, it does not follow that all those who hold Evangelical principles would be in favour of a national profession of religion. But if the association were able to induce all men in Parliament who are conscientiously of such principles to use their influence honestly and loyally in leavening the atmosphere of national Christianity, that would, indeed, be a great gain. The greater protection and enunciation of Evangelical principles in the press is perfectly legitimate. The withholding of subscriptions from ritualistic incumbents is a matter of doubtful expediency, and would be too much like a declaration of war; but the concentration of support for purposes with which a man is in full sympathy can certainly not be blamed. With reference to publications, it is very probable that much good may be done by supplying those who are under the influence of the mediæval movement with sound reasons for the more primitive and scriptural ideal; but the task must be carried out with great delicacy and tact; the writers must be sure of their ground, and nothing must be included that is offensive. The other side has an extremely active propaganda in this respect. Every clergyman, for instance, in the Dominion of Canada, and probably also in the other colonies, is supplied gratuitously with a copy of the *Church Times*; and the works of the Church Extension Society have an enormous circulation through the Sisters. The attention that it is proposed to pay to the publications of the religious societies may also, no doubt, be salutary if wisely directed.

If in all these objects the main desire of the Association be to bring men nearer to Christ, and not to any particular traditional idea, their new departure will indeed be blessed.

By the death of the Dean of Peterborough the Church loses an enthusiastic lover of one of her vastest and neediest cathedrals.