mighty inundation of voluminous comments, with which this ſyſtem of law, more than any other, is now loaded.

THE canon law is a body of Roman eccleſiaſtical law, relative to ſuch matters as that church either has, or pretends to have, the proper juriſdiction over. This is compiled from the opinions of the antient Latin fathers, the decrees of general councils, the decretal epiſtles and bulles of the holy ſee. All which lay in the ſame diſorder and confuſion as the Roman civil law, till about the year 1151 one Gratian an Italian monk, animated by the diſcovery of Juſtinian's pandects, reduced the eccleſiaſtical conſtitutions alſo into ſome method in three books, which he entitled *concordia diſcordantium canonum*, but which are generally known by the name of *decretum Gratiani*. Theſe reached as low as the time of pope Alexander III. The ſubſequent papal decrees, to the pontificate of Gregory IX, were publiſhed in much the ſame method under the auſpices of that pope, about the year 1230, in five books entitled *decretalia Gregorii noni*. A ſixth book was added by Boniface VIII, about the year 1298, which is called *ſextus decretalium*. The Clementine conſtitutions, or decrees of Clement V, were in like manner authenticated in 1317 by his ſucceſſor John XXII; who alſo publiſhed twenty conſtitutions of his own, called the *extravagantis Joannis*: all which in ſome meaſure anſwer to the novels of the civil law. To theſe have been ſince added ſome decrees of later popes in five books, called *extravagantes communes*. And all theſe together, Gratian's decree, Gregory's decretals, the ſixth decretal, the Clementine conſtitutions, and the extravagants of John and his ſucceſſors, form the *corpus juris canonici*, or body of the Roman canon law.

BESIDES theſe pontificial collections, which during the times of popery were received as authentic in this iſland, as well as in other parts of chriſtendom, there is alſo a kind of national canon law, compoſed of *legatine* and *provincial* conſtitutions, and adapted only to the exigencies of this church and kingdom. The *legatine* conſtitutions were eccleſiaſtical laws, enacted in national ſynods, held