

THE WEEK.

Vol. X.

TORONTO, FRIDAY, JUNE, 9th, 1893.

No. 28.

THE WEEK:

A Canadian Journal of Politics, Literature, Science and Arts.

TERMS:—One year, \$3; eight months, \$2; four months, \$1. Subscriptions payable in advance.

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CURRENT TOPICS.

All good citizens of Toronto must hope that the attempt which is being made by the police to close the race commission rooms, which are doing so much to demoralize young men, may be successful. Whatever difficulty there may be in bringing the operations carried on in these rooms within the reach of the law, there can be no doubt as to the thoroughly immoral and ruinous tendency of the vices which it is their business to foster. There is no worse enemy of organized society than the man who deliberately panders to the lust for gambling and betting which seems to be so powerful in these days. The craving for unhealthy excitement, on the one hand, and the degrading desire to get money without honestly earning it, on the other, render too many of our young men, who are capable of better things, an easy prey for the unprin-

ciplined and designing who lay in wait for them. It ought surely to be possible and practicable to put the brand of illegality upon the business of those who openly spread snares for the feet of the unsuspecting and foolish.

The New York Independent has a rather clever parody on a part of the trial scene in "The Merchant of Venice," designed to show the contradiction and absurdity of the present situation as created by the Geary Act. A United States marshal finds a Chinaman, Ny Look, on the street without a certificate and straightway drags him before a judge for trial. The case opens. The offence under the law is proved. The judge deplors the severity of the law, but has of course no power to change it. The marshal persists in demanding his forfeit. The counsel for Ny Look vainly pleads for a mitigation of the penalty for his client. The trial closes as follows:—

Judge: 'Twere better to have left him to his tubs; for mercy is denied him by our Geary law. This Chinaman must be deported. The law requires it, and the Court awards it. Therefore, Ny Look, prepare for deportation.

Marshal: Most learned judge. A sentence. Come, prepare.

Judge: Tarry a little; there is something else. This law doth give thee here no power of deportation. The words expressly are "deported from the United States." Take then the order of the Court; but if in the executing of it thou dost deport this Chinaman, thou dost exceed the law, and must answer for it.

Marshal: Is that the law?

Judge: Thyself shall see the act. Let Ny Look be deported; but let no man deport him. *Execunt omnes.*

An international convention is to be held in St. Paul, Minn., during the current month to discuss the question of reciprocity. We do not see why the idea may not prove to be a good and useful one. The question of trade between the two countries is primarily one which affects the people rather than the politicians, and if representatives of the people who are most interested in the matter on both sides of the line agree that it is a desirable and sensible thing that they should trade more freely with each other, they can soon find means to compel the politicians to respect their wishes. The calling of such a meeting by a body of American citizens, and the cordial response given to their invitation to participate in it, by citizens of Winnipeg and other Canadians, are but additional indications that the people in both countries are

awaking to their own true interests and becoming more firmly resolved to do their own thinking with regard to such questions, and to have at least an influential voice in deciding them. Then, again, the better the people become acquainted with each other the more readily will the sharp corners of international prejudice be worn down, and the era of mutual goodwill and neighbourly intercourse be brought in. We shall watch with some interest the trend of opinion and feeling in respect to mutual trade in the approaching convention, though it will represent perhaps but a section of the great west of both countries.

The numerous subdivisions of the old parties and other complications which are constantly arising in German politics, put all calculations at fault and make it well-nigh useless to attempt to forecast the issue of the pending struggle. Probably the balance of advantage, so far as yet can be seen, is on the side of the Emperor and his Chancellor. Notwithstanding rash utterances from time to time, which in almost any other nation would arouse distrust and resentment, and stir the people to determined resistance at the polls, as the only means of safe-guarding their constitutional liberties, there are counter indications which go to prove that the Kaiser is wise in his generation. His refusal to resort to the familiar tactics of calling out the reserves for drill during the time of the election; his refraining from Government interference in the contest; and his latest declaration that he would under no circumstances countenance the proposal to restrict the suffrage for the purpose of strengthening the Government in the Reichstag, are all, whether they are the outcome of principle or of far-seeing policy, well adapted to touch the popular imagination, by giving him an appearance of justice and magnanimity hitherto unexpected. The commencement of the struggle at the polls is drawing near, but under the system which makes a majority of the whole votes cast necessary for an election, no one hopes to see a decision reached at the first ballot. It is almost certain that weeks, possibly months, may elapse before the result of the elections can be made known with certainty to the world.

The McCarthy League—we are not sure whether that is the title by which its promoters desire it to be known—is now, it seems, a fact accomplished, and for the first time, perhaps, in Canadian political history,