

Dominion Churchman.

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THE WEEK.

WHAT may be in store for the nations of Europe, and for the world at large, it is not given to man to foreknow; but that the crisis is a perilous one it requires but very little acquaintance either with current events or past history to understand. If the sword is once drawn, when will it be again sheathed? If the dogs of war are once more let loose what thrones may not totter, what tyrannies may not be strengthened, what fearful misery may not be endured, before the dread pack is once more chained up again! What are we doing to uphold the hands of those who are striving to preserve the peace of Europe? Because the first flash of war, if it comes, will break out several thousand miles away from us, will it be no business of ours? Have we no sympathy for any but our own immediate neighbours? Cannot we afford to be a little less parochial and a little more cosmopolitan even in our prayers? Before the end of this month necessarily, and probably before many days are over, the question of peace or war has to be decided. It is now, as the expression is, trembling in the balance. Has the Church in Canada, as a whole, or have individual clergymen and congregations thrown the weight of their prayers for peace into the trembling scale?

In this much-governed Dominion the curious in such matters have annually the opportunity of studying the *menu* of no less than eight legislative *chefs*, and it may be confidently asserted that there is no instance on record in which, after His Excellency or His Honour has announced the measures of which, at the bidding of his chief adviser, he officially assumes the paternity, the Opposition has not declared with the scorn and indignation proper to the occasion, that the Ministerial Bill of fare is inexcusably meagre. This denunciation is seldom accompanied by any detailed list of measures with which the Government ought to have dealt, leaving outsiders to draw the inference that it is the duty of the party in power to invent subjects on which to legislate. Be that, however, as it may, the annual volumes of Acts which embody the results of the deliberations of our eight Assemblies are always sufficiently bulky. If deficient in quality, our Statute Books certainly do not fail in quantity, and diminution rather than increase in size is to be desired. The Governor General's speech, at the opening of the Dominion Parliament on Thursday, dwelt on several topics of importance. Once more we are informed that the surveys of the Pacific Railway are not yet sufficiently advanced to make the fixed location of the line possible. A hint is given that the expenditure in Canada is becoming too heavy for the country to bear just at present. It is hoped that strict economy will enable the Government to make both finan-

cial ends meet without increased taxation. New treaties have been made, and others are in progress with Indians of the North West, by which the native title to all the useful lands East of the Rocky Mountains has been or, it is hoped, will be extinguished. This expensive proceeding is, as His Excellency observes, "nevertheless the cheapest ultimately, and it is all a humane, just, and Christian policy."

Reference is made in Lord's Dufferin's speech to some anomalies between the Royal Commission and the Royal Instructions to the Governor General concerning the exercise of the Prerogative of pardon, and steps are to be taken to bring the two into harmony. If there is one subject on which, in these democratic days, it is permissible or desirable that a Governor should exercise a personal influence outside of the constitutional responsibility of his advisers, it is on the question of pardoning criminals that he should do so. The amount of political and personal influence, which is brought to bear upon a Minister by those who, either from a conviction of a prisoner's innocence or from denominational connection with him, or merely from maudlin sentiment, desire a convict's release, is astonishing, and instances have undoubtedly occurred in which such pressure has had more influence than the circumstances of the case justified. Unless the power of revising or reversing final sentences is very jealously guarded and very sparingly exercised, incalculable discredit is speedily brought both upon the law and those administering it. In a provincial capital which we could name, the Mayor, unknown to the higher powers, assumed on one occasion the privilege of commuting sentences pronounced by the Police Magistrate, and the result, when the practice was discovered, proved to be that, in twelve months, between eighty and ninety prisoners had, at Aldermanic solicitation, been released. The present Minister of justice has been charged with too great leniency towards murderers. But, we believe, that in instances in which a capital sentence has been commuted on Mr. Blake's recommendation there have been great technical reasons for such a course. Undoubtedly a Minister's or a Governor's first impulse should be to let a sentence stand. Presumably the judge or jury knew the merits of the case, and nothing seems to justify interference with a sentence but a very palpable miscarriage of justice—a technical flaw in the proceedings, or the discovery of new exculpatory evidence since the trial. In any case an honest Minister of justice will be glad to feel that his hands are strengthened in resisting unworthy pressure by having at his back the individual in the Dominion who is absolutely above the power of influences which may have effect on every man in a lower position.

The Ontario Legislature is supposed to be drawing towards the close of its laborious

duties. There are few subjects that have recently come before it of which its treatment has been more unsatisfactory than the Orange Societies' Incorporation Bills. We all have our personal, political, or religious predilections, many of which we so indulge and foster that eventually questions of secondary importance and sometimes of doubtful advisability come to be regarded as matters of principle. For ourselves we very sincerely regret the introduction into Canada of party organizations, especially those of a quasi-religious character, which, whatever may possibly have been the justification for their existence in other lands and under other conditions, are here totally uncalled for and serve but for the perpetuation of memories and animosities which, on this side of the Atlantic at least, should be forever buried. We have not the least fear of the religious tyranny of the Church of Rome in Ontario, and if we had we should be sorry to look upon the Orange organization, judged by its antecedent history, as the safest bulwark against Papal encroachments. As a political engine it is, we believe, even more dangerous. Our political machinery requires, and will require for some years to come, to be tended with considerable care. The spread of intelligence, strict justice, and wide charity will make our various nationalities into the one homogeneous whole and guard us against religious and partisan encroachments much more effectually and speedily than such societies as these will accomplish. "The Plant" says the Canadian Monthly "is, at best, an exotic, and has no business here, in a country where no religion is established and none is prescribed." Still, the justice which we the other day claimed for Turks, and even for Ritualists, we would now claim for Orangeism. Either the organization is permissible or not. If it is not, suppress it; if it is, allow it such a position as, in common with other recognized organization societies, it may legally claim." "Never give reasons, because the chances are you cannot give all or even the true ones," is the sage advice of a modern essayist, which perhaps comes home to those who have opposed the Orange Bills ostensibly on some grounds but really on others. For those who can appreciate the ins and outs of the situation it is somewhat amusing, but withal humiliating, to watch the tortuous policy of some of the political leaders and mentors on this question.

The subject of University affiliation is too large a one to deal with satisfactorily in a paragraph. We shall regret it exceedingly if it be true that the University of Toronto is, as is alleged, manifesting an ungenerous and illiberal spirit in this matter. Mr. Loudon warmly denies that the Senate is actuated by any unkindly feeling towards outside institutions; but there is no denying that such an impression has become widespread. The term "affiliation" is itself somewhat misleading, and but imperfectly