

THE WEEK

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Current Topics.

South
Africa.

In the March number of the New Review Dr. Rutherford Harris, the secretary of the British South Africa Company, says that the fate of South Africa must be settled, and be settled soon, and that there are but three ways of settling it. The countries south of the Zambesi may renounce all connection with Great Britain, and federate as a "United States of South Africa," hostile to the British name; they may be constituted as a new "Dominion," but a Dominion beneath the wings of the German eagle; or if England does not hesitate—if she plays her part with foresight and with courage—they may draw together as a Dominion, loyal as Canada is loyal, under the Union Jack. The second of these developments is considered by the London Times to be out of the question. "Until the British Empire is crushed; until her Navy has been annihilated, her resources have been exhausted, and her courage utterly cowed, Great Britain can never be so false to all her interests and to all her traditions as to suffer a foreign Power to wrest from her, or to filch from her, the hegemony of South Africa." Dr. Harris argues with a good deal of force that the Transvaal problem is the cardinal problem on which all else turns. The Transvaal will soon be a densely peopled State, inhabited by an English-speaking population. Before long it will attain to the rights enjoyed by free men in all civilized States. All that is necessary to bind them to the Empire, maintains Dr. Harris, is to obtain at once redress of their just grievances. The English of South Africa "look to Mr. Chamberlain, and rejoice that at last a great statesman stands at the head of Britain's colonial empire." They will not look in vain.

Brockville's
Tragedy.

It is difficult to understand why the good people of Brockville should have allowed a man like Lapointe—a drunken maniac—to go curvetting and prancing about their streets, flourishing a gun, and otherwise making himself a dangerous nuisance. His fearful crime is a most impressive object lesson on the need of restricting the carrying of firearms. No one should be permitted to carry a gun or a revolver without giving a sufficient reason for doing so, and obtaining permission from the proper authorities. The attention of the Government is directed to this matter.

The
Cattle Business.

According to the cable message of to-day, Dr. Montague and Mr. Colmer, of the High Commissioner's office, had an interview with Mr. Chamberlain yesterday touching the matter of the importation of Canadian cattle into Great Britain. It was explained to the Secretary of State for the Colonies that pleuro-pneumonia was not found among cattle in Canada, and had never existed there. The Canadian Government are confident of this, and accordingly take strong exception to the bill recently introduced into the Imperial House of Commons excluding Canadian cattle permanently from England, except for slaughter at the port of landing. Mr. Chamberlain was informed that the restoration of the free admission of our cattle would be in accordance with the spirit of the despatch which he had addressed to the colonies in regard to the development of trade with the mother country. Mr. Chamberlain was very courteous, of course, and we have no doubt that he will do what he can in the matter. It is to be hoped that the bill in question will not be passed by the House.

"Tired."

In to-day's World, Mr. Sam Hunter's clever cartoon, "Tired," exactly depicts the present political situation. A weary man, sound asleep on a pillow, represents the Canadian public. Sir Mackenzie, with a hurdy-gurdy, stands on the tired man's head, grinding out the tune, "School Question"; on the shoulder is Mr. D'Alton McCarthy, with the Protestant drum and cymbals, beating time to the "School Question"; whilst hard by is Mr. Laurier, playing upon a silver trumpet the "School Question." He is close to the "public ear," and blows his blast straight into it, but the tired man heeds not. He has ceased to care for the hurdy-gurdy man, the Protestant drum, or the silver trumpet. They can play as they please. But the public sleeps. Some other tune might arouse the weary one.

Toronto's
Taste.

The failure of another bookseller in Toronto emphasizes what was said to us recently by an experienced man engaged in the business, that the sale of books in this city has declined by over 60 per cent. within the last ten years, and that there has been an equal falling off in the character of the books for which there is demand. It is certainly a severe reflection on the intellectual tastes and habits of the people of Toronto. A first-class bookstore here is now an impossibility. The demand for high-class literature in any form, books or journals, is so exceedingly small that the man who attempts to supply it courts almost immediate failure. Besides regarding itself as pre-eminently moral, Toronto boasts of being the most intellectual city of the Dominion. Yet the journals and books for which there is any demand here are those devoted to sensationalism, gossip, and erotic twaddle in the form of fiction. Ruskin somewhere remarks that people will only willingly pay for two things: for being amused, or for being cheated.

Canada's
Exports.

It is gratifying to learn from yesterday's cable message that Britain's imports from Canada in February were four and a half times greater than the imports of the corresponding month of last