

An unpleasant rumour has lately gained currency of an increased coolness between France and Germany, from whence arising no one exactly knows. Little confidence as may be placed in telegraphic reports, yet it is shewn by experience that such reports, however improbable, are not always to be rejected; for usually an unpleasantness between two Governments is not allowed to attract public notice until one or another thinks it can gain some advantage by revealing the fact; or, at other times, the kite is intentionally flown by those who are striving, and who often succeed, in making that trouble which they appear to deprecate. At the present moment, it is only in the possible contingency of a European war that the nature of the diplomatic relations between France and Germany is of much moment. That the two countries can yet have advanced after their late quarrel beyond the bounds of hollow courtesy is too much to expect, but Europe is only concerned in seeing that they are decently civil to each other and do not again strip for a fight.

The Eastern question seems to be in this condition. The Plenipotentiaries have all left Constantinople, signifying thereby that the powers are annoyed at the rejection by the Porte of their friendly advice. Midhat Pasha, having courteously bowed out the Conference, is setting vigorously to work to prove that Turkey will do without pressure more than she was asked to do under pressure. He invites Serbia and Montenegro to negotiate a peace directly with the Porte and without the intervention of officious and questionable friends. Apparently his advances have been well received, Serbia especially having had quite enough of war, and being convinced that if she can make peace on the *status quo ante bellum* basis she will attain quite as much as she expects and a good deal more than she deserves. War is congenial to the Black Mountaineers, but if the Prince of Montenegro is well advised he will make peace with his hereditary enemies, who seem disposed to grant him the strip of territory which he has so long coveted. Concessions do not always prevent further troubles, but it is certain that the possession of a port on the Adriatic would deprive Montenegro of one excuse for the restlessness which has more than once imperilled the peace of Europe. Mr. Gladstone makes another impetuous appeal to Englishmen to shake off all sympathy with the Turk, and to leave him to the tender mercies of Russia. It does not appear to us that either the interest or the duty of England is quite so clear or so simple as Mr. Gladstone seems to consider it.

The roll of "Bishops who have resigned their Sees" is, we regret to hear, to be raised from nineteen to twenty by the retirement of Dr. Kelly from the onerous charge of the Diocese of Newfoundland. Consecrated in 1867, he served faithfully as coadjutor to Bishop Feild nine years until, on the death last year of that valiant old soldier of the Cross, the Lieutenant succeeded his Captain. It is not unusual to read sarcastic references to the number of Colonial Bishops who have

returned to England and again taken duty in subordinate positions: but it is hard to know what course of action would be acceptable to such self-constituted critics. An aged Bishop, presiding to his last days over a See that consists of little more than his cathedral town, is a pleasant picture; but in the case of a Colonial, which is in almost every case also more or less a Missionary Bishopric, a man who is physically unequal to his work can do nothing else than step aside or delegate the more arduous part of it to a coadjutor. In several cases there is no room for two Bishops; in hardly any Colonial Diocese are there funds to pay more than a moderate stipend to one. Newfoundland requires in its Bishop, besides other qualifications, a good constitution and physical strength. What the Church Missionaries in the outlying stations in Newfoundland and in Labrador endure, and the hardships which their Bishop shares with them in making his annual visitation are but very imperfectly known to the outside world. That Bishop Kelly should have felt himself unable any longer satisfactorily to discharge the duties entailed upon him by his position is a matter to us more of regret than surprise. But our regret would be much lessened if, instead of subsiding into some Perpetual Curacy in England, his services could be retained for some part of the Dominion, where, in a less rigorous climate than that of Newfoundland, he would doubtless do excellent work for the Church for many years to come. An admirable preacher, a sound safe Churchman, possessed of good sense and a conciliatory manner, and for a Bishop, still young and full of enthusiasm, surely somewhere in our Canadian Dioceses a nook for such a man might be found!

#### SEXAGESIMA SUNDAY.

**M**ORTIFICATION, fortitude, the necessity of care and circumspection on account of the prevalence of evil—these are the subjects the Church now brings before us. St. Paul's example is again brought forward; but whereas on Sunday last it was in regard to the most strenuous and active exertion, with the mortification required to make that exertion successful; on this Sunday, the endurance of every kind of tribulation for Christ's sake and the Gospel's is very forcibly shown in St. Paul's ministerial course, and is related for our imitation, as far as circumstances may require or permit. The hardships he endured were indeed almost unparalleled, and such as many Christians would be physically unable to pass through, however ardent might be their devotion to the cause of their Master. But in our measure, and according to our opportunity, we are all called upon to endure hardness as good soldiers of the Cross, to practice mortification and self-denial for Christ's sake, to be in labors more abundant, and to count all things but loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus our Lord.

The parable of the sower is the first of the parables given us by the Evangelist, and may perhaps be taken as a kind of foundation for

all the rest. This at least has been understood from our Lord's rejoinder:—"Know ye not this parable? How then will ye know all parables?" as though, on the right understanding of this, would depend their comprehension of all that were to follow. It was spoken by the side of the Lake of Genesareth, "the sea of Galilee," sixteen miles long and six wide, so remarkable for the beauty and fertility of its banks, that Jewish writers speak of it as beloved of God above all the waters of Canaan; and though one of the fairest spots beneath the sun, crushed by Turkish misrule, yet it retains many traces of its ancient beauty and fertility. The parable suggests causes of much misgiving, from the fact that of four classes of hearers of the word, three of them are unprofitable, and therefore finally rejected; while, as for the "honest and good heart," which alone can receive the good seed with profit, where shall it be found, and who can claim to possess it? And who, in this sinful world, can be called "of the truth?" for it is the universal doctrine of the Bible that men become such through hearing Christ's words, not that they hear His words because they are of the truth—that the heart is good through receiving the word—not that it receives the word because it is good. And yet this parable, with many other parts of Scripture, testify that there are conditions of heart in which the truth finds readier entrance than in others; and this not from any natural difference of character, but because the heart has already yielded to previous monitions of the Divine Spirit. So that when the word of Truth comes in its fulness, it does find, in some instances, the "honest and good heart" our Saviour speaks of. They are a soil fitter for receiving the truths of everlasting life than others. They may be like Simeon writing for the salvation of God and the consolation of Israel in any way that a Higher Power may choose to bring it about; or like Saul of Tarsus, they may be eagerly pursuing the glory of Heaven by an erroneous system though quite ready to follow the leading of a higher authority. They have a heart then that is "honest"—that is honourable, ingenuous, prepared to receive truth on sufficient authority or evidence, and equally ready to acknowledge it as such. There is a nobleness and beauty of character which has to some extent been realized; and therefore when the truth of the Gospel presents itself it finds a hearty response and a cordial sympathy. Such a heart is also a "good" one, in the sense of aiming at excellence, at the highest good, the supreme felicity of an immortal nature. It is not absolutely good as being a fountain, an originator of goodness; for such only is God Himself, and from Him alone has every particle of goodness proceeded which any of us may have possessed. But yet, by the grace of God and the influence of the Divine Spirit already imparted, it may be said, with Abp. Trench, that "the preaching of the Gospel may be likened to the scattering of sparks: where they find tinder, there they fasten and kindle into a flame; or to a lodestone thrust in among the world's rubbish, attracting to itself all particles of true