

# THE WEEK.

Vol. X.

TORONTO, FRIDAY, JANUARY 27th, 1893.

No. 9.

## 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.

Subscribers in Great Britain and Ireland supplied, postage prepaid, on terms following:—One year, 15s. 6d.; half-year, 8s. 6d. Remittances by P.O. order or draft should be made payable and addressed to the publisher.

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European Agents—SMITH, AINSLIE & Co., 25 New-castle Street, Strand, London.  
C. BLACKETT ROBINSON, Publisher.

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## CURRENT TOPICS.

According to the more specific reports which are now to hand, Chancellor Von Capri-vi's speech in the Reichstag in support of his Army Bill was frank beyond modern precedent. It throws a lurid light on the situation in Europe that the parliamentary leader of one great nation feels it justifiable or necessary to arise in his place and describe the plan of campaign which it is proposed to follow "in the next war" with a great neighboring nation, going so far as to show how large an army would be required and what disposition would be made of it at the outset of the struggle. Under ordinary circumstances such a speech could hardly fail to have the effect of hastening, if not precipitating, the war, but it may be that the two nations are now so accustomed to look upon each other as inveterate enemies that all will be taken as a matter of course. In all probability the German Chancellor has skilfully touched the right chord. The belligerent spirit of the representatives has been

aroused and the Bill will be passed, either intact or in a slightly modified form. As soon as unhappy France has rallied from the effects of the Panama scandal, she will probably feel called upon to make some responsive effort to perfect the preparations on her side. Thus both nations will go on increasing their armaments to the utmost, laying still heavier burdens upon their tax-oppressed peoples and biding their time, until some untoward event brings on the life-and-death struggle. The pity and the shame of it all is that, notwithstanding the tremendous influence wielded by the clergy and the churches in both nations, we hear nothing of any effort or movement with a view to the settlement of the quarrel on some just and Christian principle, so as not only to avert the horrors of the coming war but to relieve the peoples of the terrible incubus that is crushing the very life out of the toiling millions in each country. The professed followers of "the Prince of Peace" are evidently too busy in intriguing to turn the necessities of the governments to account for the temporal advantage of themselves and the respective churches, to be able to give time or thought to the prevention of the carnage and miseries of "horrid war."

Two or three weeks since President Harrison issued a proclamation of amnesty to all Mormons who have been convicted of polygamy, on their promise hereafter to observe the laws of the country. This probably marks the end of the long struggle with the leaders of the "Latter Day Saints." Ten years ago Congress took up the question in earnest, by passing a statute imposing heavy penalties on the crime of polygamy, and appointed a Commission to govern the Utah Territory and see that the law was enforced. For a time there was some danger of a tacit defiance if not of open resistance, but, owing largely to the influx of "Gentile" settlers into the Territory bringing with them a strong counterbalancing public sentiment by which the officers of the law were presently supported, the Mormon leaders after a time perceived that discretion was the better part of valour. Their prophets were led to discover that the doctrine of a plurality of wives is no necessary part of the Mormon faith. In 1890 a manifesto was issued by Wilford Woodruff, President of the Mormon body, proclaiming that the Church would no longer uphold polygamy and calling upon its members to obey the laws of the United States. This was the beginning of the end. More than a year ago the officials of the Church presented a petition pledging themselves to a faithful observance of the laws in the future and craving amnesty for past offences. The prayer of the petition was approved by the Utah Commission, and the amnesty has now been issued. This will, it is thought, be followed by a successful movement for the admission of Utah as a state. To those who are suspicious of Mormon faith and fear

that statehood would lead to a resumption of the old practices, the satisfactory reply is that, so far at least as Salt Lake City and the other chief cities of the Territory are concerned, Utah is no longer under Mormon sway. The Gentiles now rule. The public school system in these cities has been taken out of Mormon hands and placed upon the same basis as in other parts of the republic. The history of Utah affords a good illustration, not only of the power of public sentiment under democratic conditions, but of the only way in which the State may legitimately interfere with the freedom of a so-called religious society. Congress took no note of the religious tenets of the Mormons. It made no proscription of any article of its creed. It simply said "Here is a law of the land forbidding a certain practice which is believed to be productive of great moral and social evils, injurious to the common wealth. So long as you are citizens of the United States, you must obey its laws, or suffer the penalties." The story has a valuable moral.

Our correspondent "W," in his moderate and courteous letter in our last number, quite misses the point of the article which he criticizes. If he will refer to it again, he will perceive that it did not touch the question whether "any endeavour to modify the hardship of the Manitoba school law through the intervention of the Governor-in-Council, on appeal under the provisions of section 93 of the British North America Act, would be a gross violation of the federative compact." We had already admitted in a previous article that Mr. Ewart's contention with reference to the intention of subsection 3 of the section referred to, might possibly be correct. If it be correct and provision is thus made in the Constitution for the intervention of the Governor-General-in-Council, then any legitimate action taken under that provision cannot be regarded as an invasion of provincial rights, and consequently would not come within the aim or scope of our article, to which "W" refers. That article was occasioned wholly by the intemperate utterances of some of the French-Canadian journals, which seemed to breathe a determination to compel the restoration of the Separate school and dual language systems in Manitoba, irrespective of the judgment of the highest judicial authorities. As no decision has yet been reached under the appeal, there can be as yet no hardship or violation of compact touching the provisions of the subsection on which the appeal is based. Under the circumstances we could, then, understand the violent language of our French contemporaries only as directed against legislation on the part of Manitoba, which, so far as yet appears, was strictly within her right as a province; and we thought the occasion opportune to remind our contemporaries that no province has a deeper interest in safeguarding the constitutional rights of the provinces than Quebec, and that