

Dominion Churchman.

THURSDAY, FEBRUARY 8, 1877.

THE WEEK.

THE Eastern Question remains pretty much in the same position as last week. At least, it is not certain what success will attend the direct negotiations for peace proposed by the Porte to Servia and Montenegro. Russia has sent a Circular to the Great Powers, suggesting the necessity of doing something, and has, it is said, made overtures to Austria with a view to ensure the connivance of that Power should the Czar find it incumbent upon him to assume the initiative in attacking Turkey. The Porte meantime is massing troops in Roumania and is preparing for the recommencement of hostilities on March 1st if the negotiations fail. There is no doubt that Servia will be crushed, and Belgrade taken, if Prince Milan continues the war without effective help from outside. England is inclined to hold herself free to act as her duties or interests may suggest her doing. We shall know more about the state of affairs shortly after Parliament meets.

It is stated that the English Government is prepared to recommend the creation of four new Bishoprics, and stimulated by this concession the advocates for the increase of the Episcopate are making efforts to obtain the creation of the Six Sees for which application was made last year. The four new sees contemplated are understood to be those for the County of Northumberland (out of the Diocese of Durham); for the West Riding of Yorkshire (out of York and Ripon); for Lancaster (out of Chester and Manchester); and for Notts and Derbyshire (out of Lichfield and Lincoln).

But last week we read that Mr. Still, in a missionary visit to the Solomon Islands had found a couple of Santa Cruz natives who had, they said, warned Bishop Patteson the night before he was killed, not to go to Nukapu. Either the warning was not heard or it was not heeded. The Bishop's murder, they affirm was, as was always suspected, an act of retaliation for the killing of some islanders and the abduction of others by a "labour vessel."

They never fail who die
In a great cause: the block may soak their gore;
Their heads may sodden in the sun,
But still their spirit walks abroad.

The death of Bishop Patteson, which we can now look upon as the noble close of a noble life, will, we doubt not, prove to be *semen ecclesie*. Though he had for years carried his life in his hand, his sudden removal was a terrible shock to his friends at home, and seemed almost a crushing blow to the immature organization of the enormous missionary Diocese of which he alone of all men living knew the requirements and how to supply them. But the work, the foundations of which were laid by the first Bishop of New Zealand and on which Coley Patteson was raising such a marvellous superstructure, has, by God's providence, never gone

back; and at last we learn that, at a meeting of the New Zealand Bishops which was in session at Auckland when the mail left, the Rev'd J. R. Selwyn was to be consecrated Bishop of Melanesia. If blood is any guarantee of fitness—if the influence of noble lives can mould character—if several years of steady work may be taken as indications that a man will go on as well as he has begun, then we may feel confident that the youngest Anglican Bishop will justify the confidence reposed in him, and we may safely rejoice that the Isles of the Southern Ocean are committed to the charge of one bearing the great and honoured name of Selwyn.

Though the latest English papers do not carry us so far, we seem to be justified in stating that Rev. Arthur Tooth is now in Horsemonger Lane gaol for contempt, that is for ignoring the injunctions issued to him by the Judges appointed under the provisions of the Public Worship Act. Though we do not approve of that Act, it does not follow that we approve of Mr. Tooth's refusal to acknowledge it as law, any more than we approve of the manner in which, if reports are to be believed, the service has been conducted at St. James', Hatcham. But the questions at issue are very grave and very complicated. One of the most painful things manifested of late by the surging activity of the church in England has been the spirit of insubordination and impatience of control which seems to have taken possession of churchmen on both sides. And yet even for this there is some justification, for few know what the law of the church is to-day and none can tell what it may be to-morrow. The Privy Council rulings are notoriously contradictory, to say the least; and as regards the judgment in the undefended Purchas case a very high authority has not hesitated deliberately to declare that decision to be "a gross and palpable miscarriage of justice." And then when the bishops lamentably fail to grapple with the disciplinary difficulty and, under the pressure of popular excitement, Parliament creates or, as Lord Penzance maintains, reconstructs a Court, and that Court feels bound to enforce the notorious Purchas judgment, perhaps we cannot wonder at the reluctance of churchmen to submit without a murmur to the heavy hand of the ex-judge of the Divorce Court, however much we may approve of the Bishop of Lincoln's letter urging submission to the powers that be. Lord Penzance takes occasion to declare that his tribunal is not altogether a new creation, but is, in fact, the Archbishop's Court of Arches under a new name and system of procedure. That being the case, the ground seems cut from under the feet of those who disputed the validity of that Court's jurisdiction on the ground that it was altogether a civil and uneclesiastical tribunal. But then another objection is taken that the Public Worship Act was passed without regard to the provisions of the Statute of Appeals, (24

Henry VIII.) which provides that "both of spirituality and temporality their authority and jurisdiction do conjoin together in due administration of justice;" it being contended that the assent of the bishops holding seats in the House of Lords is not a sufficient representation of the opinion of the "spirituality" on matters involving discipline in spiritual matters. This is an abstruse question of law on which few are capable of venturing an opinion. Suffice it to say that for several generations the Church of England has "accepted the situation" of being a State Church, subject in all causes ecclesiastical as well as civil to the final decision of the Sovereign, and that a sudden alteration of its *status* is not likely to be conceded either to Mr. Tooth's contumacy or the Church Union's menaces.

Regretting as we do the position which this affair has now assumed, still we have no doubt that the Church will benefit by the ventilation of these vexed questions which must now occur. *For the sake of the nation*, it is sincerely hoped that the Church in England may never be disestablished, and those who are longing for the greater spiritual freedom which the latter would obtain should ponder well the responsibility of helping to bring about the disastrous spiritual loss which the former must suffer, if Church and State parted company. But there is no use in disguising the fact that the question is becoming a serious as well as a complicated one, and there is no doubt that (to use the words of one writer) "the conviction is spreading, not among High Churchmen only, (witness the case of Mr. Cook, of Clifton) that the direct dictation of doctrine and ritual by the House of Commons, and the direct administration of discipline by the Courts of Law is a system on which the Church of England can no longer work in face of the religious problems of to-day." The Bishop of Lincoln counsels submission to the law because it is the law whether good or bad. Those moderate men who maintain that the law is bad, and that the present state of affairs is anomalous, do not feel very kindly towards the extremists who have brought on the crisis, or towards the Bishops who have dallied with the difficulty till it has overmastered them and caused their legitimate spiritual authority to be set on one side. As an instance of the working of the Public Worship Act it may be mentioned that three persons, technically residing in the parish, but who practically never attended the Church, "presented" the Vicar of All Saints, Clifton, a proceeding which called forth an address of confidence in him from nearly 1,300 church-people.

It is gratifying to see that the question of Temperance is obtaining a firm hold on public opinion in England, and that both there and here it is being discussed in a more sensible and practical manner than has sometimes been the case. Whether Birmingham will obtain the necessary Parliamentary