

Dominion Churchman.

THURSDAY, FEBRUARY 1, 1877.

THE WEEK.

THE present Congress has had an opportunity of raising a memorial of its own existence which has been denied to many of its already little known and less regretted predecessors. The "Compromise Bill," as it is called, passed the Senate, after an all-night Session, by a vote of 47 to 17, and the House of Representatives by 191 to 86. Under its provisions the Democrats and Republicans are represented on the Commission each by five members of Congress, while the four judges named in the Bill are to-day, (Tuesday), to select a fifth, in whose hands a Republican paper bitterly complains that virtually the final decision rests. To accept that conclusion we must first admit that all the other members of the Commission will be, without exception, blind to everything, evidence and oath included, save and except the interests of their party and their candidate—an admission which, as outsiders, we are unwilling to make, though perhaps the Americans know their own people best. To judge, however, from the favourable opinions expressed on the action of Congress from all parts of the Union, and the approval given by thoughtful men to the position taken in support of the measure of Senator Conkling, it seems to be admitted that the present attempt to untie the Gordian knot of the Presidential Election is the best feasible alternative for, if not the sword, at least for any other plan which would inevitably have left the election, however decided, open to the imputation of having been won by fraud or violence. It seems to be conceded by several leading Republicans that the reference of the disputed cases to the Commission created by the Bill is somewhat in favour of the Democrats. The Electoral votes will be considered and adjudicated upon in alphabetical order. If either Florida or Louisiana is counted for Tilden, who only requires one more vote, no interest will attach to the other proceedings of the Court. But if both those States are allotted to Hayes, the contest will then turn on the one disputed vote in Oregon. Let us hope that the decision once given will be legally accepted from the Lakes to the Gulf of Mexico.

A rumour has gained currency of an intention of the Spanish Government to make terms with the Cuban Insurgents. It is, indeed, time that something of the sort was done. For many years blood and money has been plentifully lavished on both sides, and, for all that, neither seems to occupy a better or worse position than it did when the trouble first commenced. Lack of Generalship, lack of enthusiasm or of means has rendered nugatory all the Spanish attempts entirely to subjugate the insurgents and to re-establish their old supremacy in the Queen of the Antilles. The Colony and the Mother country are both becoming depleted and impoverished;

trade is paralysed; anarchy prevails; and others besides the President of the United States are justified, in the name of humanity, in asking *quousque tandem?* how long is the present miserable state of things to continue? The West India question is, altogether, a difficult one, and how to combine freedom with the work that is necessary for a colony's existence, and good government with the admission of a debased and ignorant *residuum* to the franchise is a problem in which others besides Spain are interested. England has wisely retraced her steps somewhat, and having found that a parody of the English Constitution was but ill adapted to Creole temperaments has modified the forms of Government in a direction that promises to be very successful. The experiment of Lords and Commons not having proved successful has wasted a great many years. However, the mistake has been frankly admitted and honestly remedied.

It is said that the only numerical statistics that are not dry reading are those which enable you to see how much, and how little, your neighbours have subscribed towards some charitable purpose. In the Church, the more widely the wholesome rule of giving through the offertory comes to be adopted, the less publicity is given to individual benefactions and individual shortcomings. And so it might be assumed that the columns of figures by which, in the last issue of the Diocesan Gazette, there are merely recorded the collections made in the several parishes of the Diocese for the purposes authorized by the Synod would be flat and unprofitable reading. Would that they were so! On the contrary, they are fruitful of many thoughts and suggestive of many reflections, which, however unpleasant they may be, should not be put aside. Of the details, relating as they do to the Diocese of Toronto in particular, we shall speak at greater length on another occasion; but in some main features the state of things which these figures reveal is not, we are afraid, altogether peculiar to any one portion of Canada. "Hard Times" are, as we said last week, always put forward on the smallest provocation as a sufficient excuse for curtailing subscriptions to Church purposes, but there is something more serious even than commercial depression involved in the inability or refusal of so many parishes to come up to or even approach the assessment levied upon them by the Synod. Take, for instance, the Mission Fund. The Rural Deanery of Toronto was assessed in 1875-6 in the sum of \$5,280 for that purpose. What did it contribute? Merely \$1,898! We are ignorant of the reasons alleged as a justification for the richest and largest Church in the Diocese returning less than one sixteenth of the sum asked for; but into what a miserable state of Congregationalism we seem to be lapsing! Each parson labouring for his own views and his party, each congregation giving free vent to indulgence in its narrow ideas, the behests of the Synod, the voice of

the Bishop, the urgent needs of the Church at large, all subordinated to the exacting tyranny of party requirements! "O for one hour," not "of blind old Dandolo," but of some true and noble man, gifted with large common sense and comprehensive charity, who, full of the "enthusiasm of humanity," would raise us above our petty bickerings, and out of our contemptible self-sufficiency would teach us how we could and should each work for the Church at large without sacrificing the principles which we hold dear, and would bring us all together so that social and intellectual attrition might rub off the sharp points with which we now delight to surround ourselves in our apparent determination to live as isolated hedgehogs instead of gregarious Churchmen. The time is ready, but where is the man?

Once more the telegraph sends us reports of the Pope's illness, and when these reports have reference to a man in his eighty-fifth year the "once more" cannot be repeated very often. His Holiness' vitality and his Pontificate have alike been remarkable. Shutting one's eyes to his political vagaries and ecclesiastical eccentricities, one cannot but appreciate the blameless life of the amiable old man, whose very obstinacy commands our sympathy, and the close of whose days is watched for with deep interest by all classes. While Pio Nono lives the *status qui* must necessarily be maintained. He is pleased to consider and call himself the "Prisoner of the Vatican," though, by the way, had health permitted, His Holiness would have broken his self-imposed bonds to visit his old friend Cardinal Patrizi on his death-bed. But it cannot be expected that his successor will consent to be immured alive in his Pontifical palace from the day of his election. For the then wearer of the triple tiara to retire, when stripped of his temporal sovereignty, in dudgeon to the one place which was reserved as his absolute property, was dramatically effective and not unnatural; but a repetition of the policy *de novo* would lack both novelty and effect. It seems inevitable, then, that on the election of a new Pope, some change must be made in the relations lately existing between the Vatican and the Quirinal. It is often asserted by the Romanists that *semper eadem* is the motto of their Church, and that the policy of the Pope is, in the nature of things, necessarily the policy of his successor. History, as we all know, when manipulated by *necessarian* Vaticanists, accommodates itself in the most obliging manner to whatever is expected of it; but, even were it historically incumbent on the new Pope to imitate Pio Nono, it will be almost impossible for him to do so. The Papacy, if it is to be anything, cannot remain a passive power. Within the narrow limits alone of the Citta Leonina His Holiness' temporal supremacy may be recognized, but there is a great opportunity awaiting the accession of the new man if only he have the strength and capacity to grasp it.