

# THE WEEK.

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## Current Topics.

Christmas.

Before the next issue of THE WEEK appears another Christmas will have come and gone, and the world will be turning its attention to the prosaic realities of the future again after the poetic festivities of yule with all their associations and delights. There is nothing that shows more clearly what a hold the traditions of the past have on all classes of society than the yearly celebration of Christmastide. It is to be hoped that the weather, which for a few days has certainly been of a trying order, will be of such a character, on Christmas Day at least, as to give a proper setting to the family reunions which will then take place. We may be thankful, however, that this great annual festival is built neither on climate nor on any physical considerations whatever. Its roots are in the affections, in old associations, in poetry, in what is spiritual rather than temporal. It is great enough to throw a halo of poetry over its material surroundings and accompaniments; it makes eating and drinking a sacrament, and glorifies and transfigures the prosaic products of the kitchen; idealises the merry dance and game; makes sacred the circle of those who sit around the fire. This is the great feast of family affection and remembrance; this the good hatchet-burying, forgetting-and-forgiving time. By all our remembrances of Christmas past, by the great Christian truths of which this festival reminds us, by the lilt of carols sung in frosty air in days forever gone, and by the love and affection and forgiveness that we have ourselves received, we are prompted to enter upon this festival in a spirit strong enough to rise above material surroundings and to dispense to those about us some of the hallowed and gracious feeling that should characterize this time of reunions. If people will find in ministrations to others' comfort and happiness their own best "keeping" of the day they will add one more memory to the pleasant remembrances of Christmases past, and bid defiance not only to gloomy weather but to any outside and incidental considerations. On Christmas day we will all be optimists of the most pronounced kind. As for the pessimists, we will, on that day, treat them on kindly Donnybrook Fair principles for their own good. Wherever we see a head of that character we shall all feel induty bound to hit it and to hit it hard. Perish the thought that anything can successfully stand in the way of a proper and adequate celebration of Christmas! Talk about the weather; why what would our kith and kin in Australia, in New Zealand, in India and many other places do if they gave way to the influences of weather for a single moment. They go at their Yule celebrations with a will and so must we. They blow the flies off their Christmas pudding, and keep the punkah going, and try to fancy how cool the snow is that is so admirably depicted on the Christmas cards!

A Menace to the Liberals.

The first of the bye-elections—that held on Thursday last in North Ontario—resulted in the return of the Government candidate, Mr. J. C. McGillivray, by a majority of nearly eight hundred. The Liberals and Patrons split the Opposi-

tion vote, which, united, was larger than that given for the Government candidate. But it does not necessarily follow from this that had there been no division Mr. McGillivray would have been defeated. The Patrons might not have given a solid vote for Mr. Gillespie. It is curious to note that the Orangemen of Brock voted for the Conservative, whilst the Roman Catholics of Mara and Rama voted for the Liberal. So far as the Manitoba school question is concerned the result of the election has not much significance. Though the Government's stand is decided enough, Mr. McGillivray himself succeeded in remaining unpledged. What is significant about the election is the strength of the Patron vote. The Patrons will ruin the chances of the Liberals if they persist in their present course. There is much more in common between Patrons and Liberals than there is between Patrons and Conservatives, and in the three-cornered contest the Government is bound to win. The vote of its opponents will be split as it was split in North Ontario. In Cardwell the Patrons have no candidate of their own, but here, too, the fight is three-cornered, Mr. McCarthy's candidate taking the place of the Patron. It is thought that the Liberal candidate, Mr. Henry, has but a slim chance of success, and Mr. McCarthy has appealed to the Liberals to withdraw their man that Mr. Stubbs may wage battle alone with Mr. Willoughby, the Conservative candidate. The Globe, however, does not approve of the principle of withdrawal of a Liberal candidate either in Cardwell or any other constituency, and, from the party's point of view, The Globe is right. But the forces opposed to the Government are severely weakened by these dissensions and the prospects of Conservative success at the elections brighten daily. Having got rid of such extreme men as Mr. Angers and Mr. Wallace the Government's position is appreciably strengthened. Men who hold extreme views on the race and religious questions can never succeed in Canada, nor can a party composed of such men succeed. We must have moderation and fair play for our watchwords.

Canada's High Commissioner.

An event of great interest to the Dominion is the visit to Ottawa of Sir Charles Tupper who comes at the invitation of the Premier to confer with the Government on the question of the fast Atlantic steamship service. Sir Charles is one of the most distinguished of living Canadians, and his services to his country both at home and in London have been many and great. His success in the high office he now fills with such wide acceptance has been conspicuous. We can say without any suspicion of flattery that Sir Charles Tupper has played no small part in winning for Canada and Canadians the recognition which is now enjoyed by this country and its people amongst men of affairs at the Capital of the Empire. His social success has not turned his head nor checked his Canadianism. He has not tried to curry favour with the great at the expense of his political convictions, nor has he said smooth and agreeable things when his country's reputation was at stake or its needs called for a firm stand and a decisive voice. In many and important respects he has made an ideal High Commissioner, a fact which his former political opponents have been ready to admit. We hope that his visit will be an enjoyable and a successful one in every way, and that he will return with