

Dominion Churchman.

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THE WEEK.

WHATEVER hope we may have entertained that the scandal of an English Bishop schismatically intruding himself into a Scotch Diocese would have been avoided, it has been destroyed by the accounts received by last mail of Bishop Beckles' first visitation of his "flock" in Glasgow and Edinburgh. In his protest against this unwarrantable intrusion, the Bishop of Moray and Ross says, "Of all the Bishops of the Church of England, your Lordship is certainly the very last who could have been expected to listen to an invitation from the 'English Episcopalians in Scotland' to come and reign over them. It is scarcely three years ago that your Lordship was willing and desirous to become a Diocesan Bishop in the Episcopal Church in Scotland." To this Bishop Beckles makes the lame reply that at that time he was perfectly ignorant of the government and constitution of the Scottish Church. To the Bishop of Edinburgh the intruder replies, "Your letter confirms the opinion I had formed of the arrogant claims of the Scottish Episcopal Church. I shall, therefore, God helping me, continue to exercise my office;" with regard to which determination it may be mentioned that the Convocation of York has unanimously declared that Bishop Beckles' action is a violation of ecclesiastical order; and the Bishop of London writes: "The step which Bishop Beckles' has unhappily taken is not only without my sanction, but in opposition to my earnest remonstrance." We can only repeat the regret we previously expressed that the Archbishop of Canterbury did not see fit to do more than mildly repudiate all responsibility for Bishop Beckles' proceedings.

Though we believe that those who are actively hostile or passively indifferent to any of the demands which the Church, speaking by the Bishop and the Synod of the Diocese, makes upon their purses, are alike pursuing a course which is detrimental to the Church and discreditable to themselves, yet we know that they allege—unfounded though their assumption may be—that they repudiate their just obligations "on principle;" as we, however, have never heard it alleged that the quarterly "ministrations" to the Widows and Orphans of clergymen can be considered a party question, the remissness of Churchmen in keeping that fund well supplied is both inexplicable and inexcusable. That again an intimation has been given that unless the parishes make up their deficiencies, the next payments cannot be made in full, is very humiliating. It is refreshing, however, to notice that one large and wealthy congregation in Toronto has lately paid into the Synod office the balance of \$237 due on last year's assessment, and also that of \$154 due on that of 1875. Better late than never; and this welcome, though tardy, recognition of the duty of paying confirms us in the opinion

that very frequently the remissness of the congregation is but the result of the remissness of the incumbent in putting in its proper light the duty and necessity of contributing to these funds.

Despite the trenchant criticisms of the *Times* and its Erastian compeers and the somewhat contemptuous reply of Archbishop Tait, it is very evident that the principles of the Memorial lately presented to His Grace, is coming to be very widely accepted by Churchmen. If the Bishops, Clergy and Laity were as absolutely demented and unreasonable as some of their critics assume them to be, it would, of course, be probable that any reconstruction of Convocation and an increase of its power would produce or involve a conflict with the supreme authority of Parliament. But it is neither necessary nor likely that such would be the case, were the suggestions of Dean Church and the other memorialists adopted. Owing partly to the feebleness of some of the Bishops, partly to the inexcusable and irrepressible lawlessness of some of its members, and partly to other causes, the control of ecclesiastical and even spiritual affairs has drifted more and more into law courts, the most 'churchy' of which have a lay and not necessarily Christian flavor about them. If the Archbishops would cordially endorse the proposal, we have little doubt that Parliament would readily give the necessary legal sanction to a scheme for fixing the Convocations of the two Provinces into one body, which, with a due admixture of the lay element, might be taken by all parties fairly to represent "the living voice of the Church."

That there might be danger in such a change is merely synonymous with saying that there would be a change. We, perhaps, in the Colonies are apt to underrate the danger, even with the example of the Irish Church before our eyes; because we are used, by this time, to the working of the Synod system. We should remember, however, that we have a great safeguard in the hitherto conservative unchangeableness of the Church of England, to whom we have pledged ourselves to stick closely. But the Church of England, (to quote the words of a recent writer) "has been treated as if the settlement of 1662 was to last for all time. Encased in the framework which fitted it then it has been expected to remain in it always. What is the effect of such treatment on a living body? It is benumbed in one part, inflamed in another, perhaps corrupted in the third. Its life, forcibly repressed, is abnormally developed. Ritualism is one phase of this abnormal life. But it has been taken for an excrescence of a parasitic character, to be forcibly removed! What was wanted was to ease the ligatures and restore circulation. But the doctors know better. Their remedy was excision; the instrument, the Public Worship Act; the operator Lord

Penzance. The memorialists venture to hint that the patient is no better, that the violent treatment has done more harm than good. They suggest a remedy based on their knowledge of the cause of the disease. They are looked on as extravagant visionaries. But their diagnosis is manifestly right, though their proposed treatment may not be the best. In the treatment, indeed, lies all the difficulty. To restore the circulation suddenly in a body so circumstanced might produce a dangerous disturbance. Perhaps, in the existing state of things, the only safe thing to do is to employ palliatives—to relax pressure by degrees, to adapt the framework as far as possible to present circumstances and needs. But, any way, that the Church is a living body is a fact, which no shutting of our eyes to it will alter, and it will assert itself, whether people like it or not."

With the exception of a disastrous fire in Montreal, at which several lives were lost, there is nothing unusual to chronicle in the Dominion. Rumours of a possible Dissolution of Parliament and of an impending reconstruction of the Dominion Cabinet are rife; the latter, apparently, being more probable than the former. Two or three contested elections will suffice for the present to keep alive interest in politics and for the continued ventilation of the old and new scandals, grievances and accusations, which, with other newspaper nuisances, seem to be the inevitable accompaniments, and indeed come to be considered as the necessary safeguards of constitutional freedom. It is rumoured that the Governor-General will visit Manitoba this summer.

The last news by mail from South Africa is incomplete. A letter of the 20th March affirms that Sir T. Shepstone had been successful in his mission, and that the annexation of the Transvaal would be completed in a few days. The telegraphic summary, however, via Madeira, with dates up to the 27th March makes no reference to the subject at all. The Cape Parliament is prepared to agree to the annexation of Gouqua Land West. The general outlook certainly favours the opinion that Lord Carnarvon's scheme for confederating and consolidating the whole of South Africa will before long be accomplished.

A writer in *Church Bells*, commenting on the "insult" which it is asserted that the "silent burial" clause in the Government Burials Bill offers to dissenters calls attention to the fact that, in the Prayer Book which the Puritans in 1584 requested Queen Elizabeth to legalize and enforce throughout England, the Ordinance for Burial enacts:—"The corpse is reverently to be brought to the grave accompanied with the neighbours in comely manner, without any further ceremonies." So then, he adds, the Puritans actually proposed to do away altogether with