

Montreal is now by far the largest manufacturing centre in the Dominion. The capital and management of these enterprises is almost wholly English. This city is the largest centre of commerce in Canada; and a constantly increasing proportion of this is in English hands. That proportion now amounts to about ninety-five per cent. The same remark is true of the banking interest. The shipping interest of Montreal is one of the largest in the Dominion: seven lines of ocean steamers regularly trade with the port. This is almost wholly in English hands. Where men have such immense interests at stake, and such present and future opportunities of doing well for themselves and their children, it would be absurd indeed for them to think of abandoning the locality.

With regard to the counties referred to, these too have large manufacturing, trading, farming, and banking interests, which are almost wholly in English hands. It would be absurd under these circumstances for the residents not to think of this part of the country as one of permanent occupation. There is no more migration from thence than there is from Ontario or from any of the older States of the Republic.

With regard to the city of Quebec, its large foreign trade is still almost wholly in English hands, and is still likely to be. This trade is far less than it formerly was. All trade centres fluctuate. The English population of Quebec has diminished just as its foreign trade has diminished. If circumstances transpired that made Quebec again the leading commercial centre of Canada, its English-speaking population would increase beyond all doubt. Young men would flock to it from Toronto just as they have under other circumstances moved from Toronto to Montreal, from Montreal to Toronto, or from both to Winnipeg.

In spite of the constant increase in the French population of this Province, its commerce, manufactures, shipping, banking, and capital generally, are centering more and more in English hands. The truth with regard to the French of Lower Canada is that their system of education, being purely ecclesiastical, does not fit men for commerce or business; and ecclesiastical establishments are absorbing more and more every year of the means of the French population, while the people themselves are becoming, on the aggregate, poorer and poorer. This, however, is their own affair.

A RESIDENT OF MONTREAL.

January 12, 1886.

#### CHRISTIANITY AND TOTAL ABSTINENCE.

To the Editor of The Week:

SIR,—If total abstinence from inebriating liquids as beverages be a supreme virtue for all time and in all circumstances, as it is now declared to be by some purists, it follows that if Christ partook of the fermented juice of the grape, He did not live up to the highest ideal possible for man in a perfect state of being. If that is permissible as virtue in a perfect man which is vice in one who is not perfect, it follows that virtue and vice may change places in altered circumstances or states of being—a position quite untenable. In these premises, then, if Christ used "wine" in its inebriating or conventional sense, He did not fulfil the whole law of righteousness, and His life upon earth was lacking in one particular, with this significance, that men may now live a more virtuous life in that one particular than He did, in never partaking of fermented beverages. His followers, therefore, in such a case cannot lay hold upon His life as the one perfect example and ideal, and they cannot lay hold upon His death as an expiation for any shortcomings save His own, if even that,—"sin" being, according to the Scottish Shorter Catechism, "any want of conformity unto, or transgression of, the law of God"; and if total abstinence be a supreme virtue and a moral law, He neither conformed to the one nor observed the other. This may seem a little irreverent to sensitive minds; but they cannot deny that plain speaking is necessary when so much falsified truth is floating around.

If, however, Christ never used wine as a beverage, while never formally adopting and inculcating John the Baptist's regimen and example as a principle, He either considered the matter as an open question to be settled by every man's own individual conscience and at his own option, or He allowed His disciples and apostles to be deceived into thinking so, and He permitted His Church to be also deceived for nearly nineteen hundred years into using, in one of its most sacred ordinances, that which is now said to be the least sacred thing upon earth, and not only that, but the most "devilish." Such silence and such inaction for such a length of time upon His part would seem to imply not only that as a Divine Being, influencing and governing His people, but even as a man, neither in His intellect, nor morals, nor spirituality, nor knowledge, nor foresight, was He the equal of those men who in all ages have antagonized that which they say is the one thing which ought to be more specially, formally, and pronouncedly stigmatized than any other one thing within the domain or ken of man. So that, whether our Lord in reality abstained or did not abstain, there remains an unwarrantable and jesuitical doubt cast upon Him, and chiefly by His own ambassadors; and in the light thrown upon the whole subject of Bible wines, which were all, as their name implies, alcoholic, but some adulterated with noxious drugs—in the light thrown upon the question of temperance in Mr. Goldwin Smith's admirable pamphlet just issued, and Mr. C. Gordon Richardson's able appendix thereto,—it becomes the bounden duty of those clerical purists either to produce stronger exegetical evidence for the faith they profess, or to try to undo the evil morals they have already instilled into people's minds. Either that, or they ought to construct a new Bible wherein the injunction, "Be temperate in all things," must be made to read "Be totally abstinent in all things," and upon that solid and logical basis destroy the moral order of the Scriptures altogether.

But to those who believe that the Bible can be comprehended by those who read it, and that it can be intuitively understood in its teaching and

purifying influences by their children who read it; and that its words and sentences convey the plain meaning intended to be conveyed,—all these may rest well content that Christ never deceived by His silence or in any other manner. These will comprehend that He drank the common wine of the country, which was slightly inebriating; that He is the God-man; that Himself is the final Court of Appeal; that He cannot deny Himself, and consequently cannot censure any one for following His example in matters essential and optional; and that His ambassadors have no right to do so either.

Yours,

A.

To the Editor of The Week:

SIR,—The student of English political life cannot fail to see the gathering clouds which threaten to darken the policy of the British Ministry. It is a matter of indifference to advocates for the unity of the nation which of the two great political parties succeeds to the government of the country, so long as they do not hold office at the will of Mr. Parnell. That party will deserve the respect of the world which will flaunt defiance at the Irish demagogue, and bid him do his worst. The English electors will support them, for when the impending dangers of dismemberment become the issue, the people will see that the unity and dignity of the nation are inseparable. It has been truly said that the unreflecting portion of mankind are so taken with the spectacle of energy on a large scale that its attraction to them is irresistible; vigour becomes an end in itself and an object of admiration for its own sake. Bravado is but a poor substitute for bravery, and it is pitiful to see this worse than worthless characteristic paid so much homage by the press of this continent. If one will but think how infinitesimally weak the Irish Party is in the Commons as compared with the consolidated strength of Liberals and Conservatives; and also ask what formulated and specific grievance they have advocated, one cannot but recognize that their hopes of success are entirely dependent on the action of either of the great political parties. The Liberals and Conservatives have each displayed weakness in their greed for power. Their action has been destructive of the highest sentiments of national life. Fear is written in every act; traitors lie ambushed in government purple, ogling at avowed plunderers to lend assistance to the ruin of the First Power in the world. Mr. Parnell knows full well that the late course of the great parties means the end of the Union. He will form an alliance with either, and play political battledore and shuttlecock with them until his as yet unknown and limitless demands are granted. The programme will not end this side of dismemberment of the Union, which will carry in its train all the horrors of internecine warfare. It is idle to hope that the loyal, educated, industrious population of the North—the bone and sinew of Ireland—will recline supinely while levy is made upon the products of their toil and vigilance. If Mr. Parnell can baffle either party, Ireland will become the arena of the most ferocious national tragedies in the pages of history. The flag which gathers within its folds the oppressed in every clime can ill afford to allow those near and dear to the nation to cry in vain at the threshold for that protection which is the inherent right of every loyal subject of England. The catastrophe can be averted by Parliament. If party spirit is laid upon the shelf for a brief season, the first word from a consolidated English party would relegate Mr. Parnell and his followers to the cooling shade of an unoffending minority. There, in his impotence, he could pass his time in formulating the grievances of Ireland. If he would present a claim for a free school system, and other practical measures to lead the Irish people up to civilization, he would not only deserve the respect of the world, but earn the everlasting gratitude of his countrymen.

Woodstock, Ont.

Yours faithfully,

HOWARD J. DUNCAN.

#### THE EMPLOYMENT OF INFORMERS.

To the Editor of The Week.

SIR,—It appears from the new Mayor's Message that he intends, in his destined crusade against the unlicensed sale of liquor, to make an extended use of informers, whom he proposes to tempt with large rewards. To put down the unlicensed sale of liquor is quite right; it is the thing that most manifestly needs to be done; and done it may be, provided the people are allowed a sufficient number of licensed and regulated houses, without which unlicensed places of sale will multiply, do what you may to prevent them. But the employment of professional informers is almost as objectionable as the sale of unlicensed liquor. A drunkard may be not a bad man in heart, though addicted to one fatal indulgence: a professional informer must be utterly vile. Morality is the main object, and you miss it if in suppressing intemperance you create villainy. There can be no doubt that much useful evidence might be obtained by torture; but society has rightly determined that no evidence can be worth that price. Let the police and the regular detectives do their duty; and if their number is not sufficient, let them be reinforced.

Yours faithfully,

GOLDWIN SMITH.

IN France it will soon come to be a distinction *not* to have been a Minister. There are, it appears, ninety gentlemen alive who can, if they please, inscribe "Ancien Ministre" on their cards. Fortunate, truly, for the finances of France that Republican economy does not grant pensions to retired statesmen. More curious still, there are fourteen Prime Ministers who have held office since 1870. If these gentlemen could agree among themselves, a Cabinet could be formed consisting solely of ex-Premiers, and there would still be two or three of the eminent men to spare. And yet, with all these ex-Prime Ministers available, M. Grévy is very hard put to it to find one who is willing to come into office again.