

Dominion Churchman.

THURSDAY, DECEMBER 20, 1877.

THE WEEK.

THE Chefoo Convention with China is occupying considerable attention in Great Britain. It is a treaty engagement with the Celestial Empire, and was drawn up by our English diplomatist. It exacted from the Chinese Government some important concessions; it obtained an indemnity for the murder of Mr. Margary, and opened up five new ports to English commerce with China—at the same time regulating the mode of diplomatic intercourse between representatives of the two Empires. The Treaty appears to have been signed on the spot, and was sent to England for ratification. That ratification, as far as the English Government was concerned, was deferred until the opinion of the Indian Government could be obtained upon such clauses of the Treaty as touched the accursed opium traffic, which the Chinese Government has always discouraged, but which the English Government has as persistently demanded permission to carry on, so that the Convention has not yet been ratified in England. But in the meantime, strange to say, the Chinese have acted with extraordinarily good faith in the matter. They have paid their indemnity for the murder of Mr. Margary, have opened their ports, and have practically fulfilled the obligations which they undertook. And now the question is very naturally asked whether England ought to make the fulfilment of her obligations dependent upon the Government of Calcutta in regard to the demoralizing traffic in opium. The English people have received the good things promised by the Chinese authorities, and it is certainly scandalous not to reciprocate their good faith. Nor is there anything more discreditable to a Christian government than the way in which for a number of years England has enforced the traffic in opium—a drug infinitely more mischievous, both in body and soul, than all the alcohol in the universe.

President MacMahon has surrendered at discretion and the Dufaure ministry is gazetted. The Paris press approve of the result, and congratulate the country upon the moderate Republican cabinet which has now assumed the reins of power. The President's Message was read in both the Chambers, and has given satisfaction to the majority. The whole Budget for 1878 was expected to be voted before the Chambers separate. The state of things has caused great and universal satisfaction. The message states that the elections in October affirmed afresh the confidence of the country in Republican institutions. The message continues:—

"In order to obey Parliamentary rules, I have formed a Cabinet selected from both Chambers, composed of men resolved to defend and maintain these institutions by the sincere exercise of constitutional laws. The interests of the country im-

peratively demand that the crisis shall be set at rest, and not renewed. The exercise of the right of dissolution is in effect nothing but a supreme consultation before a judge from whom there is no appeal, and could not be established as a system of government. I believed it to be my duty to exercise this right, and I conform myself to the reply of the country."

The message is much applauded by Senators of the Left. Of the Deputies the members of the Left Centre principally applauded, but the message on the whole made a deep impression. The Right were silent.

Later intelligence states that the Senate voted "urgency" for the bills authorizing the collection of direct taxes and granting a sixth of the Budget.

Ministers have informed a deputation from the Left they would immediately stop the payment of all fines and suspend all pending proceedings and sentences for press offences.

The question of peace in the South-east of Europe is variously estimated. After the capture of Plevna the English papers indulged in a vast amount of bombast about the immediate necessity of interference on the part of England, stopping Russian aggression, and all the rest of the nonsense usually indulged in on such occasions. Now, however, we are told that Mr. Layard, the British Ambassador, has informed the Turkish Government that England will preserve her neutrality. An unusual stock of rumors is current. One is that a Bucharest correspondent states, it is known to many that the Czar was privately warned last August if Russia entered on a second campaign, it would be impossible to restrain England from hostile action; and that influential Russians consider the present to be a highly favorable moment for direct negotiations between Russia and Turkey.

Turkey's first efforts to obtain the mediation of the Great powers appear to have failed. Germany is said to have replied that treating directly with Russia would be the shortest way of coming to an understanding. When the Turkish Note was first introduced, the Austrian Government is said to have replied that it could hold no hope of successful mediation on such a basis. Speculation on the only basis of a durable peace is, of course, at present, premature. Probably Russia will be content with nothing less than the independence of Serbia, the autonomy of Bulgaria, Hertzegovina, Montenegro and Bosnia, and the cession to herself of at least Kars and Batoum, with the neighboring country.

At the Diocesan Conference held in Manchester, November 21st, Bishop Fraser congratulated his Diocese on the peace and harmony subsisting among them. He was pleased with the good and earnest work going on; in fact churchmen in that Diocese were too much intent in carrying on the work of the Church to think of turning aside in order to persecute those who wished to work in somewhat different way from them-

selves. He noticed some complaints which had been made in the papers to the effect that all "burning questions" had been excluded from the programme of the Conference; but he thought there were subjects to be brought up of such a nature that if any gentlemen had an inclination to burn their fingers they would find abundant opportunity of doing so. He designated the programme as being at least practical. He was inclined to think that the least practical subject to be introduced was on "The relations of Church and State." He spoke of narrow views and extremes as disorganizing the Church's functions and causing ecclesiastical parties. He said the three objects the Church has in view are truth, edification, and government; and of these three he thought edification was the most obtainable.

The Bishop referred to an article in the *Nineteenth Century*, by a Nonconformist teacher, who tells us that it is an idle dream, an impertinence almost an insolence, for Churchmen to imagine that the Church will ever again comprehend Nonconformists. "If so," said the Bishop, "let us turn our attention nearer home, and make the Church strong by making her as useful and as comprehensive as we can. There are certain things which it is right and wise to do whether we can gain proselytes by doing them or not. It is always right to follow after the things which make for peace, and whereby one may edify another. These things I hope we may do, without exciting envy or opposition. Though these Conferences cannot actually effect much, they help to generate public opinion on matters affecting the Church; and that opinion should be large, liberal, generous, and tolerant. *We feel that we have inherited a great trust; and we desire to discharge ourselves of it in the highest interests of the commonwealth, and as men acting in the sight of God.*"

The recent decision of the Court of Queen's Bench is producing some important results. The decision is no doubt "a heavy blow and great discouragement" to those who have given themselves up to a system of active persecution, although that decision was given on purely technical grounds, and was in no way intended as a justification of the ritual Mr. Tooth had employed. In reference to remarks made by the Judges as to the absolute novelty of Lord Penzance's Court, and that it is in no way a continuation of the Arches' Court, the Archbishop of Canterbury has directed attention to an important "Memorandum," reminding us that the *obiter dicta* of the Chief Justice and his colleagues must be separated from their judgment on the technical omission of the name of the place in which the Judge was directed to sit, and that there is an express provision in the seventh section of the Act, declaring that the proceedings under it in the Southern Province "shall be deemed to be taken in the Arches' Court of Canterbury." The exact technical value