

THE WEEK.

Vol. XI.

TORONTO, FRIDAY, AUGUST 3rd, 1894.

No. 36.

THE WEEK:

A Canadian Journal of Politics, Literature, Science and Arts.

TERMS:—One year, \$3; eight months, \$2; four months, \$1. Subscriptions payable in advance. Subscribers in Great Britain and Ireland supplied, postage prepaid, on terms following:—One year, 12s. 6d.; half-year, 6s. 6d. Remittances by P.O. order or draft should be made payable and addressed to the publisher.

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C. BLACKETT ROBINSON, Publisher.

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CURRENT TOPICS.

Every manly Canadian must have blushed to learn that certain members of the volunteer regiments have been guilty of the baseness of cheating at the rifle ranges. Taken in connection with such other disgraceful facts as those brought to light some time since, of wholesale personation in the Civil Service examinations, to say nothing of the contagion of roguery which seems to have infected the Public Works and other departments of the public service, there is too much reason to fear that our educational and political institutions are for some reason failing to produce, unmixed, the classes of "men, high-minded men," who, alone, constitute the material out of which a great state can be formed. While no pains should be spared to correct the defects

in the systems in question, which make such results possible, it is evidently of the first importance that the authorities, political, judicial and military, should put the proper brand of reprobation upon all such baseness. This reminds us that it is about time to ask what has been, or is being done, to visit with condign punishment both the personators and those who were so base as to employ them, in the examinations referred to. There can be no doubt that stern justice meted out impartially to the doers of such dishonorable deeds becomes a powerful educator of the public conscience in regard to such matters.

The tendency to extremes is the besetting weakness of republicanism, especially French republicanism. But a few years ago, France was being congratulated by all the more liberally disposed on-lookers, on the supposed fact that her revolutionary crisis might be regarded as past, and the stability of the Republic assured. To-day political wiseacres are beginning to whisper ominously their suspicions that the end of French republicanism may be near. But the other day, the sympathy of the civilized world was hers, in the hour of her great sorrow, and many were admiring the dignity with which her statesmen set about supplying the place of the murdered President, and taking care that no harm should come to the Republic. To-day finds her new Government forcing through the Assembly a measure so restrictive of the liberties of press and people, a measure clothing the few men at the head of affairs with powers so arbitrary, that the fears and passions of many patriots are aroused, and one can almost catch the breath of revolution in the air. Foreign statesmen are looking on with astonishment at the folly of the rulers who have missed so grand a chance to enlist the patriotism of all classes in behalf of wise and energetic measures for guarding the safety of the nation against a most atrocious band of assassins, and have, instead, brought upon themselves the execrations of the multitude. What will the Government do with the terribly drastic legislation now they have succeeded in passing it, is being asked with bated breath. To enact it by main force and then fail to use it will mark them as imbeciles. To enforce such despotic deprivation of liberty, will be to shake the nation to its centre—perhaps to pave the way for a dictator.

Whatever may be the outcome of the tariff-struggle now going on in the Ameri-

can Congress, Canadians will be dull pupils, indeed, if they do not lay to heart the many valuable truths such an object-lesson so plainly teaches. It and the whole series of events which have led up to it and grown out of it, have, we believe, impressed most of the thoughtful amongst us with a conviction of the general superiority of our own political system. Among other lessons it is well adapted to impress upon the minds of onlookers, the danger resulting from a system of high protection is one of the most valuable. The real source of the difficulty is, it can hardly be denied, in the results of that system. Those results are just what any clear-headed political-economist might have predicted, and what many have again and again predicted. So many immensely wealthy individuals and corporations, trusts and monopolies, have been created by the system and have immense interests at stake in its continuance, that the nation is no longer self-governing. The people no longer rule. It has so far availed nothing that a great majority of the most intelligent and most industrious citizens have become convinced that the system is unjust and ruinous, and ought to be reformed. Their utmost efforts, resulting in a great victory at the polls two years ago, have so far proved powerless to secure the Reform legislation to which the victorious party was most solemnly pledged. The trust, the monopoly, and the money have, thus far, proved too strong for the will of the majority. We may hope to see the freedom-loving instincts of the people eventually triumph, but the nation is being rent and half-ruined in the contest. Surely every thoughtful Canadian can draw the moral.

In view of what is transpiring in France many will be disposed to think that Lord Rosebery, after all, may have been wise in declining to entertain Lord Salisbury's Bill for the restriction of alien immigration. It is extremely desirable to discriminate carefully between theoretical socialism and practical thuggism. So long as the sympathies of the Radicals and Socialists can be kept enlisted on the side of law and order, the nation is tolerably safe. Any extreme legislation which, in addition to smacking of national panic, tends to arouse the resentment of those who are advocating change, however revolutionary, by constitutional means, and possibly to enlist their sympathies on behalf of those who may be harshly dealt with on mere suspicion, must inevitably do more harm than good. The question of the desirability of heroic legislation