

# Dominion Churchman.

THURSDAY, AUG. 23, 1877.

## THE WEEK.

THE declaration that "the situation is critical" has become so common that, like the voice of the boy crying "Wolf," it fails to arrest attention or to prolong the interest taken by the average reader in the matter to which it refers. Everything, however, points to the conclusion that a crisis is fast arriving in the war between Russia and Turkey, on which if not the fate, at least the duration of the struggle, very materially depends. Since the relief of Kars by the Turks comparatively little interest has been taken, and very little intelligible information has been transmitted concerning the movements of the two armies in Asia Minor, it being apparent that, for this season at least, it is unlikely, if not impossible, for the Russians to obtain any advantage so decisive as materially to affect the conclusion of the war. In Roumelia, the battle of Plevna, a few days' rain, and the consequent increase of sickness among the troops and of disarrangement of the transport service, have very considerably changed the aspect of affairs, and clouded the fair prospect of an early and honorable peace which was at one time opening before the Czar's eyes.

The situation is, at the moment of writing, something of this sort. The Russian line of advance extends from Sistova to Tirnova and the foot of the Balkans; the ground held beyond the mountains and the Passes that were occupied having been, as far as can be ascertained, abandoned since the disaster at Plevna. It is possible that some Russian troops are in danger of being cut off in the mountains; but probably they have rejoined, or will rejoin, the main body. On both flanks of the main Russian line strong Turkish forces are concentrating. If those advancing from the West form a junction with the army that has its base at Shumla, the Russian situation will be perilous. On the fate of an action now said to be imminent, it depends whether the invaders can hold Tirnova or will be forced back towards the Danube. In the meantime they have invested Plevna, the commander of which is said to be already short of supplies, and rumour has it that the fire of the fortress of Rustchuk has been silenced by the Russian batteries. But in no case is the prospect of an early peace very bright. The passage of the Balkans raised Russia's hopes, the victory of Plevna has so excited Young Turkey's enthusiasm, that neither party is willing to listen to any suggestion of peace. Midhat Pasha is said to have been recalled, and as he is an ardent believer in Turkey he is not likely to negotiate a peace the basis of which must necessarily be a concession to Russian demands or an admission of the justice of Russia's complaints.

In Manitoba Lord Dufferin's geniality and eloquence are rendering his Excellency as popular as he is in the rest of the Dominion, and we cannot but trust that his presence there may smooth over many little local difficulties, and establish a better feeling than has always existed between parties, races and sects in the North West. Their Excellencies' visit to the Grey Nuns' Orphanage at St. Boniface, brought out in an interesting way the variety of the nationalities of which the Dominion is composed, and which it should be the pride and endeavour of every one to amalgamate into one homogeneous whole. The Winnipeg papers say that on that occasion little girls each "representing the various nationalities, English, Scotch, Irish, Canadian, American, Cree, Metis, Sauteux, Sioux, Maskegon, and Montagnais, uttered in succession a word of welcome in her native tongue." One may ask what the difference may be between the "native tongue" of English, Canadians and Americans; but the account of the proceedings at St. Boniface raise another thought. We admit, as frankly as Lord Dufferin himself did, the great work that has been done and the self-denial that has been shown by the French Missionaries and pioneers in the North West. They have the credit of having, at the risk and often at the cost of their lives, carried religion and civilization to wigwams and lodges to which Englishmen did not follow them for many long years. But yet, as Canadians, we cannot but read with some regret all their children singing little French songs, of all the proceedings being carried on in French, involving as that does the perpetuation in the West of the trouble and inconvenience incident to the existence, in an essentially English colony, of a race which, however loyal to the Crown, is yet alien in thought and language to the vast majority of its fellow subjects. And as Churchmen, too, we must regret that the Romish Church has gained such a start in the North West, that it will take many years of hard work to overtake it. The Church, however, is at last alive to the situation, and from the recent creation of new Missionary Bishoprics we may hope that for the future the emigrants and other residents may have no excuse for wandering out of the true Fold, and that many of the Red Men may be gathered into it from a district that has been long and inexcusably neglected.

We noticed a few weeks ago the formation in London of a so-called Church League, the object of which is the disendowment as well as the disestablishment of the Church of England. Mr. Mackonochie, the President of the League, seems to have lately delivered himself, at greater length than before, of a statement of his peculiar views on the subject. Endowments Mr. Stanton explicitly declared to be an unholy thing; of course they are to be abolished altogether. "As to churches and parsonages," says Mr. Mackonochie, "it would seem fair that the churches

should be left to us; and when the parsonage is of modest dimensions, not unsuited to the limited resources of the parish priest, and near the church, it might reasonably be left also." When all the clergy take the vows of celibacy and poverty, then the picture drawn by the priest of St. Albans of the humble parsonage, and "perhaps a small garden and field," may be realized in England. But at present, though doubtless there are manuals which would fain make us believe that celibacy is as compulsory for the clergy as they assert confession to be for the laity in the Church, Mr. Mackonochie's ideas are slightly utopian. When, however, the Church Leaguers are satisfied that their ideas are not likely to be adopted in England, they can easily emancipate themselves at least from a share in the penalties attaching to endowments. They can without difficulty find a Colonial diocese in which "the unholy thing" is unknown—in which there are no offensively "large parsonages with costly *entourage*," but where the limited resources of the parish priest and the parsonage of modest pretensions are not unsuited to each other; where it might not be always possible for the priest to live "near the Church," or at least near all of them, as he may find dependent on him; where it is certainly optional whether he practice celibacy or not, but where, without any vows, there is no option about his poverty.

The Exeter branch of the E. C. U. lately passed a resolution condemning the *Daily Express* on the ground that "the Catholic cause is denied a fair hearing in its columns." Dr. Pusey writes to the editor to say that, though he has not seen the letters referred to, it is probable that the editor really served the cause best by suppressing them, for to their clerical correspondents much of the coarseness remarkable in some High Church papers is to be mainly attributed. "The habit of writing off to newspapers under the impulse of the moment has, I think, greatly changed the character of many who would be 'defenders of the faith.'" Certainly without any praise to those who laboured in the same cause thirty years ago, the tone, especially in regard to those who are in authority over us, has strangely changed, and not for the better. In many of the writings in question, the Bishops seem to have been put in a class to which neither reverence, nor justice, nor even charity was due. More harm has been done to "the Catholic cause" by letters written in newspapers than could be done by twenty Church Associations; for no one can injure our cause except ourselves. Since the meek, we are told, shall inherit the earth, such letters are not title deeds to it.

It is announced that Mr. Mills, the Minister of the Interior, has, on the part of Canada, made an arrangement with the United States Government by which a

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