

Dominion Churchman.

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THE WEEK.

IT is easy, we all know, to be wise after the event; but still there are events and accidents of such constant recurrence, in which cause and effect are so very potent, that it is really marvellous to find how little precaution or forethought is exercised regarding them. If a gun, loaded and capped, is left in the corner of a room which children frequent, sad experience teaches us that the chances of some one being shot are very great; and yet fathers and brothers go on leaving their guns in the corners. If we entrust young men of ardent temperament, expensive habits and social tendencies with the control of money, or that which represents money, and if, when they are seen to be indulging in luxuries and pleasures far in excess of what their obvious means of subsistence justify, no precautions are taken against the forfeiture of their trust, can we wonder that on some fine morning the little world in which they live is startled by the announcement that so-and-so has misapplied (to use a euphemism) the funds entrusted to his charge? It is not pleasant to act as a detective over your friends and acquaintances, in the same way as it is very disagreeable to the philanthropist to entertain suspicions of the truth of the piteous tales that are poured into his ears. But real charity involves the necessity of guarding against imposition; and so the duty of employers and real kindness towards those employed alike suggest and counsel the adoption of keen watchfulness over young men who are placed in positions of trust and responsibility. A miserable instance of what may occur when such watchfulness is not exercised has lately startled Toronto society. It is the old story of Strachan, Paul and Bates over again; excepting that they misappropriated other persons' securities to prop up a falling bank, whilst Barber did the same merely to gratify private speculation and to provide, as he hoped to do by that practice, a means for indulging in luxuries which his legitimate income was insufficient to provide. The sentence of five years' imprisonment is a heavy one, but, considering the circumstances, the severity was probably necessary. The whole case should be instructive alike to managers and subordinates. When good principle and honesty are losing their hold upon any section of society, a sharp lesson has to be taught, and not even the most thoughtless can refuse to admit, when the picture is presented to them of the indescribable agony which remorse and the enforced commingling with the lowest felons must cause for the first few months of imprisonment to a man born and bred as a gentleman, that a game which has such a conclusion is not worth the candle.

Of Canadian news there is not very much to record this week. Politicians have been busy with speculations as to the gentleman

to whose care the portfolio vacated by Mr. Letellier de St. Just may be confided. Whether M. Pelletier or M. Fabre obtain the coveted position is a matter that concerns us editorially very little, or whether the much-abused M. Cauchon be "kicked up stairs" again to the Senate Chamber. It is not our part to judge any man by anticipation, and there is no reason—the whole political press to the contrary, notwithstanding—why politicians should be exempted from the operation of this sensible and charitable rule. To secure and, when secured, to uphold a good honest Government is a work in which we can all take part. When corruption begins to show its head, when dishonesty mars the reputation and the usefulness of a public man, then every newspaper, connected or not connected with politics, ought to speak out; and, for our part, should such an occasion unfortunately arise, we shall speak out. But with the minor details of Government we have no call, and no intention, of ever interfering. By death and resignations some changes will be necessitated on the Quebec Bench, and we are only quoting the opinion of the Bar of that Province if we say that the opportunity of infusing some new blood into veins of the judiciary has not come too soon.

Mr. James, of Halifax, is gazetted as Judge of the Supreme Court of Nova Scotia in the place of Mr. Justice McCully, deceased; an appointment which, if rumour is to be credited, is not altogether satisfactory to some of the Government adherents in that Province. It is stated that Mr. Lawrence Power, son of Mr. Power, M. P. for Halifax, is to have the vacant Senatorship, and presumably, in such an unusual occurrence as a son being put over the father's head, the assertion that the Government, for reasons of their own, do not wish to stir up an election contest in Nova Scotia, may be tolerably correct. The Ontario Legislature, having paid to conventional usage the customary tribute of a wasted fortnight, may be supposed to be likely soon to get to work. The politician would deserve well of his country who could devise some more expeditious method of getting up steam in our Legislative machinery, for it is not only a loss of time at the beginning of the session that the country now pays for, but the necessarily hurried way in which ill-considered measures are pushed through and well-considered ones crowded out at the close is a blot upon our wisdom and a tax upon our pockets.

The Governor General and Lady Dufferin have spent a week in Toronto, during which time the inevitable addresses, meaning nothing, have been received, and the answers, meaning equally little, returned, dinners eaten, dances danced, and speeches made. For those who could honestly afford to take part in the festivities the relaxation has been an agreeable break in the monotony of impecunious existence which seemed to have settled down on the Western capital. That the Governor General's speeches and replies have

been uniformly felicitous and to the point was only to be expected from a descendant of Sheridan, a man of versatile genius and shrewd political insight. At the National Club, however, was the prevailing feature of His Excellency's speech, which appears to have been most thoroughly appreciated by his audience. At the Toronto Club dinner the exuberant spirits of the witty Irishman seem to have given place to the deeper thoughts of a reflective Statesman; but there is this to be said about Lord Dufferin's speeches, that his wit is not merely wit; underneath his banter lies a shrewd perception and a keen appreciation of more abstruse political and solid problems which, when presented in a humorous manner, are imbibed and appreciated by many to whom the dry enunciation of the same opinions would not only be distasteful but unintelligible. As regards the National Club, it is freely remarked upon that the only allusion that was made to the possible eventuality of Canada becoming independent was received with deep and suggestive silence, while every reference—and there were many—to the maintenance of our close connection with the British Empire was received with uproarious applause. The views which the absent President of the Club is supposed not only to hold, but to advocate, concerning our "manifest destiny," are obviously not shared by the members.

In the United States the uncertainty respecting the Presidential election still continues, each party straining every nerve to secure legal recognition of its having polled a legitimate vote in the doubtful States. Whatever may be thought of the dodges to which the wire-pullers are resorting in this their dire extremity, no one can fail to appreciate the calmness and self-control with which the nation at large is enduring this very alarming crisis. The better men on both sides feel that the situation is too serious to be trifled with, and the people, for once in a way, are inclined to put country above party. By hook or by crook Mr. Tilden or Mr. Hayes may obtain legal possession of the White House and all that its occupancy involves, but a President elected not only by a very narrow majority but by a vote which the other moiety of electors will persist in believing to have been obtained by fraud or intimidation, carries no weight; and under the irritation of defeat when victory seemed so near, what security is there that the leaders will control, can control, the black or white "residuum" which forms the very dangerous substratum of either of the two great parties? American society has been agitated over the horsewhipping—apparently richly deserved—of one noted New Yorker by another, and the rumours of a subsequent duel. "Affairs of honour" are rare in the United States, and this is not altogether due to the fact that they are illegal. Even that barbarous and unchristian system must be credited with some little good, for, when it