

Dominion Churchman.

THURSDAY, DECEMBER 13, 1877.

TO SUBSCRIBERS.

THE Key to the House of Bishops was accidentally omitted last week. It will be found in the advertising columns of this week's issue.

THE WEEK.

AFFAIRS in France continue in the same unsettled and unsatisfactory state as ever. In fact, the excitement increases; society is beginning to feel unsettled, and we know not the moment when the volcanic fires, now smouldering beneath the surface, may develop themselves either in the shape of a *coup d'etat* or a revolution. M. Dufaure has been engaged in negotiations for a ministry; but these have failed. Mac Mahon is said to be "obstinate" about the portfolios of War, Marine, and Foreign Affairs. He appears to require that the heads of those departments should be free from parliamentary influence; and on his part it is alleged: "The President having accepted the conditions on which M. Dufaure agreed to form a new Cabinet, had on his part asked as his sole condition that the Ministers of War, Marine, and Foreign Affairs retain office. No difficulty ought, it would seem, to have arisen on this point, as it had been admitted under all previous Ministries that these Departments should, in the interests of the country and army, be placed beyond the reach of parties. At the last moment, however, these portfolios have been claimed by the projected Ministry. The Marshal has not been able to agree to this modification, which appears to him adverse to the good organization of the army and the continuing of diplomatic relations." On the part of the Ministry it is stated that: "President Mac Mahon told M. Dufaure the latter was responsible and free in the choice of colleagues. M. Dufaure is much surprised at the Marshal's determination to insist on the nomination of three Ministers." The Marshal is said to be bent on dissolution; and this causes the Republican press, as might be expected, to be extremely violent; some declaring that the failure of M. Dufaure's negotiations was part of a preconcerted plan, others that the Deputies will reply to a second dissolution by impeaching MacMahon of high treason. In the meantime, M. Batbie has been entrusted with the task of forming an Administration. He has stated that he thinks a dissolution perilous, and he is not in favor of it.

A Paris dispatch, on the 10th, states that the aim now pursued, and which has never been abandoned, is a second dissolution; but that now the dissolution will be complicated with what it terms a fiscal *coup d'etat*; which is explained in this way: No amount of haste can procure the voting of the Budget before the New Year, and even if the Chamber should be asked to vote it, which is uncer-

tain, it will most likely reply by an absolute refusal. So that, in making a dissolution under these circumstances, the Government will have to supply, somehow or other, the absence of the Budget; and whatever that measure may be, it must defy the constitution, and therefore belong to the category of *coups d'etat*. It is said, however, that the Left propose to vote a twelfth of the taxes. The President is reported to have stated that, not having succeeded in forming a Cabinet acceptable to the majority of the Chamber, he would form one to suit the majority of the Senate. If the Senate refused to accept it, he would resign rather than renew negotiations with M. Dufaure.

Rumours are circulated to the effect that Lord Beaconsfield will retire from the Premiership before the assembling of Parliament, Lord Derby succeeding him in that office; and the Marquis of Salisbury succeeding Lord Derby as Secretary of State for the Foreign Department. Should these rumours turn out to be correct, we may look for an earlier solution of the Eastern question than we should otherwise have expected.

All fears regarding the safety of the "City of Berlin" are now set at rest by the news of her safe arrival off Queenstown, which she passed on her way to Liverpool; all being well. When only two days distant from Queenstown, on the 30th of November, her shaft broke, and in consequence of the easterly winds, the steamer made little way under sail. On Saturday night she spoke the steamer "City of New York," and was by her taken in tow.

At last, Plevna has fallen. After a severe engagement on the 9th, it surrendered unconditionally. The Turks were dying of hunger and cold, and Osman Pasha was badly wounded. He attempted to cut his way through in the direction of Widdin, but was attacked in the front and rear, and after a tremendous struggle, involving prodigious acts of personal valor, he was compelled to lay down his arms: and Plevna is now in the hands of the Russian and Roumanian armies. Great rejoicing, as might be expected, is manifested at Bucharest, which is covered with flags. The event appears to be hastening decisive action on the part of the Servians who are negotiating at Russian head-quarters; so that the participation of Servia in the struggle is considered to be only a question of a few days.

At Constantinople, the Council of State has actually determined that Christians shall hereafter be eligible for Governorships and other administrative offices in the Turkish provinces! This sounds all very well, but who will appoint a Christian Governor in any part of Turkey? No such Governor would be safe, and no Government of the Sultan dare appoint such a one.

The *Times* suggests that Kars and Plevna,

two of the most redoubtable and important of the fortresses in the Sultan's dominions, having fallen, the time has now arrived when mediation is possible, and it hopes that the British Government will not be slow to use all possible efforts for the purpose of obtaining a durable and honorable peace.

The prospects of peace between Russia and Turkey and the conditions of it, have been considerably agitated during the past week—not officially that we know of, but in high and influential circles nevertheless. Among other suggestions, that of Prince Wasilitchikoff has attracted a large amount of attention, and its merits have been much discussed. He proposes that the Turkish fleet should be surrendered to Russia as an indemnity, and that the Black Sea should be recognized as belonging exclusively to the two powers now at war—that is to say, Turkey being without a fleet, to Russia only. As for the surrender of the Turkish fleet, we presume it will become the property of Russia when that power shall take it: until then we apprehend, Turkey will probably retain possession of it. Although Plevna has fallen, Turkey may not acknowledge herself beaten, while Erzeroum and the Balkans are still in her hands. Other proposals of peace from a Russian source, demand autonomy for the Christian population of Turkey, independence for Servia and Roumania, increase of territory for Montenegro, the free navigation of the Dardanelles, and Russian possession of Kars and Batoum. Another question has also been started in connection with proposals and prospects of peace; and that is, as to the extent to which England is to be consulted, or whether she is to be consulted at all in the matter. Taking into consideration the fact that she might have settled the matter herself long ago, and did not do it, we fail to see what right she can have to expect that either Turkey or Russia will consult her on the subject. It is true that she sent a plenipotentiary to a sham conference, the only object of which, as was afterwards clearly apparent, was to hear what the Sultan's Government had to say; the representatives of the Great Powers being assembled in solemn conclave just merely to listen to a statement of the final decision of Turkey. The object could just as easily have been secured without a conference at all. As it is, and entirely through the fault of England, Russia has obtained possession of the strongest fortress in Armenia; and who is to dislodge her? And on the other hand the Turks at Constantinople declare their intention to fight as long as they are able to do so.

The late Vicar of Hatcham, the Rev. Arthur Tooth, has at length gained a victory in the Queen's Bench Division of Her Majesty's High Court of Justice. The whole proceedings taken against that clergyman last year under the Public Worship Regula-

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