

Dominion Churchman.

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THE WEEK.

WE gave circulation not long ago to Colonel Gordon's confident expectations that the vast powers which the Khedive had entrusted to him would enable him to exterminate the slave trade on the Nile. His anticipations may seem to some to be too sanguine, considering the number of persons, official as well as private, that are interested in the traffic, and the extent to which the practice has become almost as second nature to those who have engaged in it from generation to generation. Recent reports, too, of the extent of the trade now carried on in Egyptian vessels from the Red Sea ports almost make one sceptical as to the power of any one man to stop such a gigantic evil. Nor must the uncertainty as to the complete *bona fides* of the Viceroy himself be left out of account. It is undoubtedly more from his desire to indefinitely enlarge his own borders and to obtain control of the trade of the region of the great Nyanzas than to any inherent love of humanity that he is now maintaining a large force of soldiers in Equatorial Africa. But still Colonel Gordon is not a blind enthusiast. He knows what he can accomplish, and the world knows by this time that he is even better than his word. He fully understands both the Khedive's character and the difficulties of his position; and so when he says he means to extinguish the trade on the Nile we are inclined to believe he will do so.

A year or two ago a strange Oriental potentate, the Sultan or Seyid of Zanzibar, visited Europe and was the lion of one London season. People wondered why the English Government made so much of so comparatively unimportant a personage, whose political influence was supposed to be so small. We see now, however, that the effect of the trip has been decidedly good on the Seyid's character. Much against his own inclination, and obviously against his own interests, he has been forced officially to discountenance the Slave Trade. Since his return to Zanzibar he has honestly endeavoured to carry out his treaty engagements, and those who know him well seem convinced that His Highness is personally resolved to put an end to the traffic if he can possibly do so.

The King of Dahomey—to jump across to the west coast of Africa—has been brought to reason by the blockade of his ports, and sues for peace, alleging, however, his inability to pay the fine of 500 barrels of oil which was imposed upon him. Latest despatches say that the English Government is willing to accept a smaller amount, its object, of course, being not to obtain the oil but to bring the sable potentate to reason and to make him feel in his pocket, as he has no conscience, that he must behave better for the future.

And now, to jump to the South of the Continent, the news is again encouraging as to the probability of the Transvaal Republic agreeing to the South African Confederation. President Burgers, who formerly opposed the idea, has now recommended its acceptance to the Volksraad, where, however, the influence of that section of the Boers, who are naturally very jealous of their independence, may defeat the proposal. At the other end of the line, too, the Cape Colony has not officially endorsed Lord Carnarvon's scheme, which, however, must sooner or later be carried out. As Englishmen we must all be interested in the vast continent with whose destinies England is, without any active will of her own, becoming more and more closely connected, as we confidently believe, for some good purpose. As Churchmen we must be particularly interested in South Africa, where the Church is manifesting such wonderful and encouraging evidences of its vitality and of the existence of the true missionary spirit.

The proceedings at Ottawa are of a somewhat unusual, if not a very edifying, character. Presumably we ought to give both sides credit for a desire to maintain the purity as well as the independence of Parliament, but sudden eagerness to discover instances in which members have received Government pay, and the issue of writs against the supposed delinquents for the recovery of sums of varying from two to six hundred thousand dollars for the infringement of the Act, looks very like pique, party rancour, and an angry application of the meanest of all arguments, the *tu quoque*. In the excitement of party strife, injustice is often done to individuals, and violence frequently offered to principles also. Still it will eventually be a gain if the line is more clearly drawn between the permissible and the unpermissible in this matter. It seems absurd to argue that the owner of a newspaper which publishes Government advertisements, is technically or morally a "contractor," though the object of the Act undoubtedly is to prevent members from receiving money in any form from the public purse. But let the question be decided. It is hard for a man to lose his seat for having unwittingly contravened an act of Parliament; but it is infinitely more objectionable for any one wilfully and willingly to contravene the spirit of the Act, or, by secrecy or manoeuvring, to evade its provisions.

The first Annual Report of the Church of England Institute has been sent to us from St. John. Our first feeling, on looking it over, is one of regret—almost, we are afraid, amounting to coveting—that such an organization does not exist in Toronto. We see by its pages that the clergy of all shades of thought—and the shades are still deep and various in New Brunswick—belong to the Institute, which numbers in all 317 members. It has its committee, its lectures, its reading room and library, and in fact, forms just that

centre for Churchmen to rally round, of which in some places we could mention, we feel so lamentably the deficiency. But putting aside our own selfish and perhaps desponding regrets, we heartily congratulate churchmen in St. John in having so far trampled over the petty prejudices which are so often a fatal hindrance to effectual co-operation. We are convinced that, if people will only come together, they can work together. We are not so very far apart after all. Our differences, like worries, are intensified by brooding over them. If we could but work together, we should all draw closer together. New Brunswick has had its period of ecclesiastical darkness—and pretty black it was too—but the light of charity, common sense, and comprehensive toleration has dawned upon it. It is, unfortunately, a light which travels slowly, but still we live in hopes that it may reach Canada West ere long.

As we write these words, the question of peace or war is not decided, at least war has not actually been declared; but we fear that it is almost absolutely certain that hostilities will have commenced before our next issue, perhaps before the present one, meets our readers' eyes. Despite the hopes which are expressed that the war may be localized, few dare believe that such will be the case. A conflagration on so large a scale that once gains headway is not very easily extinguished. What, it may be asked, is Russia going to war for? The Czar answers the question by declaring that he does so in the interests of humanity—an assertion that does as well, perhaps better, than any other. But it hardly is the whole truth. Russia wants to go to war—because she wants to. She has placed herself in such a position before the world, and towards the Turks that she cannot demobilize her army without her doing so being construed as a defeat. The last manifesto of the Sultan is certainly not calculated to soothe Russian susceptibilities. The two Governments have—to use a common phrase—"got to loggerheads," and unfortunately no one of the Great Powers has the means as well as the inclination to insist on each keeping the peace.

It is not at all certain that, should war break out, victory will at the first onset declare itself on the side of Russia. The Turkish Fleet, under Hobart Pasha, is certainly not to be despised, while the land forces are, at least, very different from the "buono Johnnies" who so ingloriously evacuated the position above Balaclava in October 1854. The Turk of to-day, if he can do anything, can fight when well led on, and leaders will not be wanting. In peace, he is usually so enervated, so corrupt, so demoralized, that underneath the debt that science and learning owe to Mahomedans, and judging of El Islam by what we know to-day of Stamboul, or Damascus, we are apt to forget the light that shone from Bagdad, Cairo, and