

THE WEEK.

Vol. X.

TORONTO, FRIDAY, MAY 12th, 1893.

No. 24.

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.

What a spectacle for gods and men is presented in a meeting of our City Council! The petty bickerings, the wire-pullings, the calling of names, the imputations of motives, the playing at cross purposes, in what should be a dignified deliberative Board, composed of the wisest and best men of the City, are enough to make one blush for himself and his fellow-citizens, whose joint suffrages can produce nothing better in the way of civic administration than this. Matters of the gravest importance to the health and well-being of citizens are pressing for attention. But when we look for the "grave and reverend seigniors" whom we might expect to find deliberating in all seriousness and good feeling, under a sense of their heavy responsibilities, what do we see? Let anyone frame in his mind a picture of what such a body of civic rulers might reasonably be expected to be like, and with that ideal before him, attend one of the meetings of the Council, or even read the meagre

report of its proceedings in a morning paper, and mark the contrast. It was hoped that the enlargement of the wards and other changes made a year or two since would have improved and elevated the character of the Council. Perhaps it has done so. But is there really no possibility of adopting a more excellent way of transacting the business of the City? How long before we shall become wise enough to select a few of our very best men and pay them a fair remuneration for devoting their time and brains and energies to the management of its affairs?

The long-expected crisis has come in Germany, and the Empire is in the throes of such an internal struggle as it has rarely known—certainly has never known under similar circumstances. To an observer in another hemisphere it is, at first thought, difficult to see on what the Emperor and his Chancellor base their hopes of obtaining from the suffrages of the people better terms than they were able to obtain from the representatives in the Reichstag. The outward signs do not seem to indicate any tendency in the direction of increasing favour for the military system, or increasing reverence for the royal prerogative. And yet it would be rash to assume that the defeat of Chancellor Caprivi and the Army Bill is certain. On the side of the Emperor there are agencies of tremendous power. The sentiment of loyalty to the throne and to the person of the sovereign, to which he so often appeals, is no doubt still very powerful, and it will be exploited to the utmost. Then there are the racial distrust and dread of hereditary foes, the military spirit, the patriotic pride and ambition, and kindred feelings, which count for so much among a people with such a record as that of Germany. Nor is there any reason to suppose that the Government will be over scrupulous in the employment of the many influences of a more sordid and practical kind, in the use of which the monarch and the government have always so great an advantage. In view of such considerations it would be rash to predict for the Opposition the sweeping triumph which they probably expect. We can only watch the progress of the struggle with the interest which springs not only from curiosity but from a conviction that it involves issues fraught with good or evil to other nations as well as that immediately concerned, and even to the civilized world.

Premier Mowat can hardly be congratulated upon either the consistency or the co-

gency of his answer to the deputation which waited upon him the other day to present the petition of the Toronto Women's Enfranchisement Association. He is reported as having said more than once in the course of his reply that he concurred in almost all that had been said. He intimated that he had expressed the same views probably before any of those who were before him had come into the world. Surely Sir Oliver did not stop to think what these statements imply. They clearly imply that for at least half a century (we are guessing, of course, at the ages of the male members of the deputation) he has believed, in addition to a number of other opinions carrying practical corollaries, that the Province of Ontario still refuses the right to vote to more than half the population entitled to it; that it unfairly and in violation of "simplest, clearest, broadest principles of eternal justice," refuses to allow women to have their proper share in making the laws by which they are governed, etc., and that, though for nearly half the period named he has been the Premier of the Province and the head of a "Liberal" or "Reform" party, he has never, so far as we are aware, taken a single step to remove this great injustice and reproach. What boots it to plead that the time has not yet come for such a change and that he is not sure that he has in his Cabinet a single Minister who supports his view in regard to it? Who is in a better position to hasten the time than the head of a Government supported by so strong a majority? Who is responsible for the choice of Ministers favourable to what he regards as an act of simple justice to one-half the whole population, if not the head of the Government? In all of this we are, of course, merely suggesting some hypothetical syllogisms based on premises furnished in the Premier's speech, not stating our own opinions upon the subject-matter of the interview.

The pending suit of the Canada Revue against the Roman Catholic Archbishop of Montreal, claiming \$50,000 damages in consequence of the Archbishop's having placed the Revue under the ban of the Church, is naturally exciting a good deal of interest in both Protestant and Roman Catholic circles. The decision of the court cannot fail to have important consequences. The success of the action would mean the weakening of the hands of the Roman Catholic prelates and clergy very materially by depriving them of a power which they have hitherto