

THE WEEK.

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The Week,

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TOPICS OF THE WEEK.

THE *Globe* objects to the statement that government by party is mischievous. But it would have been no more than just if our contemporary had discussed that proposition from the standpoint that all its intelligent advocates take, and which is perfectly well understood—that government by party, for the sake of party, and not in the interest of great principles adopted by that party for the public advantage, must end in misgovernment—cannot but resolve itself into a struggle for “kudos” and emoluments. *Vide* either the Dominion or Provincial Parliament, or both. *Ex pede Herculem*. The most diligent search fails to show that either the Conservative or the Liberal party in Canada has at the present moment an intelligible programme, or that one is distinctly at issue with the other upon any great public measure. Who that has followed the past Ontario session can say that it was to place ameliorative measures which they advocated upon the statute book that the Government were put in power, or that the vocation of the Opposition was to protect the Province against hasty or ill-judged legislation by judicious and healthy criticism? To the most cursory observer it was patent that the members on the Speaker's right hand considered their first duty was to maintain that position, whilst their opponents were as determined to spare no pains to oust them—in both cases the loaves and fishes being the primary consideration. On one point alone was there unanimity: that the science of government is thus summed up—

“That he shall take who hath the might,
And he shall hold who can.”

It is quite true that many “intelligent, honest, and well-meaning men,” refuse to go into politics; nor is it wonderful, seeing that these qualities are almost at a discount in public life. It is such men who lament “government by party,” *pur et simple*, and they can afford to leave the use of innuendoes to those who substitute them for arguments in defence of party rule. The old gentleman of the Bastille could not bear light and gaiety after the gloom of his dungeon, and he missed his pet rats.

WHETHER the much-discussed bribery charges will be sustained before a superior court—and there are those who think the Provincial Government in cooler moments will not push the affair to extremities—or whether the Royal Commission of Enquiry will elicit further evidence of importance, the public is apparently convinced that a *prima facie* case has been established in the Police Court. The scandal is so indicative of the political immorality of the “conspirators,” and the attempt to bribe was so poor a compliment to those “approached,” that honest Canadians must

in despair begin to cast about for means to purify the political atmosphere. The reception given by their constituents to the members whom it was sought to corrupt must have been grateful salve to the many wounds they received in hoisting the enemy with his own petard.

MR. DWIGHT'S refusal to comply with a wholesale order to produce telegrams will meet with the approval of the great majority of the public. If the prosecution had shown, or had good reason to suspect, that telegraphic messages relating to the conspiracy had passed between the accused on or about certain specified dates, a reasonable ground for demanding such telegrams in the interest of public justice would have been established. But it is monstrous to demand the exposure of whatever business the accused may have transacted over the wires during two months. With a precedent such as that established, what is to prevent any unscrupulous speculator from demanding, through a tool in the House, under a trumped-up charge, that, “in the public interests,” certain telegrams relating to operations he has in hand may be handed to him or their contents be made known?

THE death of Prince Leopold, though it shocked the public by its suddenness, was just such a termination to his career as had been expected by those who were conversant with his physical condition. It is more than probable the sad event may have marked and serious effects on Her Majesty. Leopold was the favourite son, and through him her relations with the Government of the day were usually kept up. The Queen has unquestionably been in a very critical mental and physical condition for some time, and the shock to her system caused by the death of the Duke of Albany is almost certain to develop further complications which may necessitate an early abdication.

THE New York *Sun* has the execrable taste to describe the late Duke of Albany as a “listless, feeble, morbid, and shallow-pated Prince, who could never have fairly earned a pass degree at Oxford or gained a livelihood at any manly calling.” *De mortuis nil nisi bonum*. And further, the deceased Prince's physical weakness ought rather to have earned for him compassion during his life and protected him from insult after death. But the above slander is as untrue as it is unmanly. Weak, physically, the Prince unfortunately was, but it is perfectly well known that his disability did not prevent him attaining an education extremely creditable under the circumstances—an education that would have made it impossible for him to write in so brutal a manner of his humblest dependent—or even of his slanderer in the *Sun*.

THE Colonel Burnaby who is mentioned in the accounts of the battle at El Teb is no other than the soldier who was made cruelly famous by a certain advertisement about the wonderful effects which followed prescribing a certain pill to a savage in need of castor oil. Commanding the Horse Guards, Colonel Burnaby is a standing reproach to the stay-at-home officers of the Household troops, who really seem to be occupied so much by “kettledrum” tea-meetings, balls, suppers, and bazaars that they hardly find time to dance attendance on their duties. Dashing from one quarter of the world to the other, and generally with your life in your hand, as Colonel Burnaby does, is certainly a nobler existence than wearing out the carpets in Belgravia or idling the season out at the “Rag.”

LORD TENNYSON has taken his seat in the British House of Lords. In a very small House, and with such nervousness as suggested feebleness, the laureate, looking ridiculous in his robes, went through the solemn form, which is spoilt by so much pantomime. When Lord Clyde took his seat he is said to have sworn at his robes. Lord Tennyson is too polite to be profane, but he looked as though an oath would relieve his mind as much as it would that of Mr. Bradlaugh. His petticoats annoyed him; he stumbled over them, and seemed to wish them miles away; and as soon as he could get them off he did so, and marched away home. He left the House without settling the vexatious question of the party to which he belongs. Introduced by the Duke of Argyll, he took his seat for a moment on the baron's bench which is on the Tory side of the House, and when he had disrobed he left a country anxious to make even a poet into a partisan, still quarrelling whether our greatest man of letters is a Liberal or a Conservative.