

Dominion Churchman.

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THE WEEK.

IN cases where two combatants are threatening each other and making gigantic preparations for fighting, it is scarcely safer to utter predictions as to peace or war than it is to foretell the weather; and yet the opinion expressed some time ago in our columns that England would not embroil herself in the Eastern question, however important a settlement may be to her interests, seems destined to be realized. The telegrams are now much more uniformly of a peaceful character, and the chances of a general European conflagration or even of a war between Russia and England, every day become less and less—always excepting any influence that may be exercised by the clamors of a London mob, which to-day would break the windows of the advocates of peace, and to-morrow would stone the members of a government which by entering on an expensive war had doubled or trebled the price of bread. There are also said to be a couple of hundred thousand Moslems in India in so excited a state that they are burning with the most intense desire to fight in support of their co-religionists. And doubtless if England were really to engage in war with Russia for the defense of Turkey, she could rely on a vast number of her Hindoo subjects for the purpose. They would of course have to be paid, the munitions of war would have to be purchased, and the expense of the contest, which would be of no ordinary character, and of no short duration, would be enormous. A vast expenditure of blood and treasure would be incurred—which no one doubts that the British empire would be able to furnish—and we may be thankful that, at present at least, the prospect of such a war appears to be averted.

The conditions of peace are now the subjects of debate in the British Houses of Parliament, and indeed all the world over. Lord Derby, in the House of Lords, said he considered it absurd for England to go into the Congress or Conference unless she had a real and not merely a nominal power of dealing with matters before it. The *Times* contends that Russia should submit all the peace conditions to the Congress, including also the indemnity clause. The writer of the article says she has no right to be dictator over Turkey and that she has had no commission from Europe to replace the government of the Porte in any way she may think fit. One of the most important subjects connected with the main question, appears to be the bringing forward of the Greek claims. Sir Stafford Northcote, in the House of Commons, confirmed the statement that Greece would be represented at the Conference. The *Times* eulogizes the action of the British Government in advancing the Greek claims. It says that "no decision so patriotic and far-seeing has been taken by the Cabinet in

many a day, as the step proposing Greece should be represented at the Conference. It recognizes that the old state of things could not be restored, and that the best materials for replacing it are to be found in the Hellenic races." This is putting the matter in an admirable light, and we may rejoice that the whole question has taken so favourable a turn, and one so consonant with all the best friends of the Christians in the East could desire.

In Berlin, the feeling now appears to be that since the terms of peace are known it will be desirable to take precautions for the safety of general European interests. It is said that France and England have agreed to make a joint intervention in the affairs of Egypt. Both powers have addressed remonstrances to the Khedive and offered to send officials to investigate the finances. Austria has also shown considerable anxiety about Egypt, and it is thought the whole subject will be brought before the coming Congress.

Austria has requested that the date of the Congress shall be somewhere between March 25th and 31st. Russia had not, at the date of the latest advices, forwarded a definite answer to the request. The recent illness of Prince Gortschakoff appears to present the difficulty. It is said that Russia continues to contend that only those points of the Treaty which are decidedly and unmistakably of general European interest, and calculated to affect the general welfare, should be brought before the ensuing Congress. It is understood to be pretty certain that Austria will support Great Britain in her efforts to have the Greek Government represented at the Congress. We trust their efforts will be successful. There will be no better barrier against the encroachments of Russia, no better guarantee for the security of the Christians in the East than the elevation of the Hellenic Kingdom, in addition to the absolute independence of Servia and the formation of a Bulgarian principality, unless it might be the union of the whole into one Government.

The award of the Halifax Commission is, as was expected, the subject of much discussion among our neighbors, some of whom, as usual, are contriving, if possible, to wriggle out of it, or shuffle through it. The award, it will be remembered, was not unanimously agreed to, but was the decision of the majority of the Commissioners. In the U. S. Senate, Senator Blaine said it was difficult to treat the award with respect, as it made them pay a million dollars per annum for catching less than four hundred thousand dollars' worth of fish. He said the Treaty of Washington gave the Halifax Commissioners no authority to consider that a mere majority could make an award. Representative Hewitt, of New York, said that eminent statesmen had declared that the arbitration would put off reciprocity for twenty years. He also said that twenty years ago the United

States used to send abroad great and distinguished men, while in these degenerate times the foreign missions were a refuge for played-out politicians; and the newspapers had taken the place of the old-fashioned diplomatic service. He considered five and a half million dollars to be paid as damages to the Canadian Government for the privileges enjoyed by United States fishermen was monstrous; and he thought it was now time to ascertain whether the diplomatic system was worthy of respect, or whether it was not rather expensive, unnecessary, and a useless show.

On the other hand, there are to be found those who view the matter in a different light. Messrs. Hamlin and Dawes maintained that the honor (!) of the Government required the payment of the award, although the United States got nothing by it—which seemed to trouble them a good deal. The *Tribune* says: "The question of the legality of the Halifax award has been revived, and our Washington despatches present a strong array of technical points which lawyers urge to show that it is not binding. It is to be regretted that some understanding as to the finality of a majority award was not reached, so far as the representatives of the two countries could bind their governments, before the award was made. Now that the decision has been given, and is adverse to the United States, we should be very slow to take advantage of any merely technical point. The very fact of arbitration presupposes a willingness on both sides to come to an agreement without undue formality or without any desire to haggle over the flaws which are the meat of lawyers in the courts. It would be better to be over-honest than less than honest."

"Notes on some passages of the Liturgical history of the Reformed English Church," is the title of a book just published by Lord Selbourne, and as he was one of the judges of the final Appeal in the Ridsdale case, the treatise has been received with considerable interest, from the supposition that it would shed some light upon the reasons to be assigned for the remarkable judgment given by the Court in the prominence given to the "Advertisements" of Queen Elizabeth; which until this judgment was delivered, were believed never to have the authority of law, and even if they could have had that authority, they were abrogated by the statute of 1662. His Lordship, however, gives not the least information upon the subject; although he certainly lays down a principle which should ever be borne in mind, viz.: That controverted questions as to the meaning and effect of disputed rubrics in our present prayer book are not to be settled by the private opinion of any man; although it must be admitted that the meaning attached to a disputed passage at the time it was written might receive considerable light from expressions of the writer of it, published at the same time. In refer-