

Dominion Churchman.

THURSDAY, APRIL 5, 1877.

TO SUBSCRIBERS.

WE sent the usual accounts to our subscribers at the beginning of the year. As a considerable number of them have not yet been replied to, we purpose in this and the following week to send them out again, and trust they will remit at once; and thus meet with the attention which is so desirable in carrying on an enterprise like that of the DOMINION CHURCHMAN.

THE WEEK.

SO that Protocol which Russia has been hawking about Europe has at last been signed by all the Great Powers. Having been signed the question now is what will its effect be, and the answer seems to be that although by this means the danger of an immediate declaration of war has been avoided, the real solution of the Eastern Question has only been temporarily postponed. England is said to have stipulated that, should Russia not immediately carry out her promised disarmament, her own adherence to the Protocol should be *ipso facto* cancelled, and it is stated that as preliminary to the signature of the instrument, Count Schonvaloff gave a verbal assurance that Russia would demobilize the forces. This Protocol apparently embodies the results at which the Constantinople Conference arrived and is to be submitted to the Porte. If the Porte attaches its signature, it formally accepts the recommendations and reforms suggested to it by united Europe. If it demurs to signing, what then? The Powers reserve to themselves the right of considering what steps should next be taken, apparently to force Turkey to obey their wishes.

Herein lies England's real difficulty. She wishes—as who does not?—to see a decided improvement in Turkish rule and manners, and to know that justice is meted out and freedom guaranteed to the Christian subjects of the Sultan, but she has good reason for objecting to material pressure being applied to the Porte or for its autonomy being infringed. General Ignatieff is said to have declared at Vienna that Russia's unselfishness had been grossly misrepresented in this matter and that the Czar would not accept Constantinople as a gift “even if offered for his acceptance upon a golden dish.” We do not know much about the “golden dish” or the meaning of the expression, but we do know, that to acquire possession of the Bosphorus, with all that it involves, has been the darling ambition and aim of Russian rulers and statesmen for a century, and nothing has lately occurred to justify a belief that such desires have been suddenly abjured, and whatever may be one's reluctance to impugn the honesty of the distinguished personages who voluntarily make these strong asseverations, it cannot be altogether forgotten how

very vigorous were the assurances given to England that nothing would induce Russia to annex Khiva; and, nevertheless—Khiva was annexed.

What a pity it is that the compilers of telegraphic news cannot take a juster view of the relative importance of the occurrences with which they have to deal! Of all the scandalous and humiliating delinquencies of the day perhaps the operations in New York of the Tammany ring are the most disgraceful, and there is a wide interest and a general satisfaction in learning that the chief swindlers have been detected and are being made to disgorge their ill-gotten gains. But we in Canada hardly care to know all the minute details of the doings, in England, of a traveller who is supposed to be Oakey Hall, the ex-Mayor of New York, who has absconded, or been made away with, in view of the disclosures against his Confederate swindlers which, it is understood, that Tweed will make after his release. If the agent of the Associated Press cannot find items of more real and general interest, he might spare his employers' pockets and their readers' time.

The Duke of Richmond has introduced into the House of Lords the new Government Burial Bill, which it may be hoped will, with some modifications, set at rest that much discussed question. Of course it is not to be expected that any measure, short of the surrender of the old Church yards, and Churches too, to the sweet will of every ranting preacher, will satisfy the demands of the most extreme advocates for what is called euphemistically called “Freedom of Worship;” but the new measure will go far towards satisfying all reasonable men. “Hitherto,” as *Church Bells* says, “Although men could not help dying, there has really been no obligation on anybody to provide a place for burying the dead; all was left to the Church's charity.” But the Bill establishes a Burial Board in every part of the country, whose duty it shall be to provide sufficient accommodation for the burial of all parishioners. The word “sufficient” is expressly to be construed as having reference to the requirements and prejudices of Dissenters, for whom, if any number object to be buried in the Churchyard, the parish is bound forthwith to provide another cemetery. In default an appeal lies to the Home Secretary, who can force the parish to do so. One concession is made to non-conformists: a body may be interred in a Churchyard silently, the friends notifying the clergyman in writing that they do not wish for his intervention.

Mr. Chamberlain's Resolution to empower Town Councils to obtain the exclusive privilege of retailing intoxicating drinks, to legalize, in fact, that which is known generally as the Gothenburg system, was summarily rejected by the English House of Commons by a majority of 103 to 51. It is easy to say,

and also to believe, that the advocacy of a scheme involving not only so vast an expenditure, but also some principles which are a little alien to English habits, is premature; still the discussion has not been without its value. Some statistics brought forward by Mr. Chamberlain are rather startling. During a few years the number of children, in England, attending school has risen from 773,000 to 1,863,000, an increase of 240 per cent.; the cases of drunkenness had risen from 82,000 to 203,000, or 247 per cent. In 1861, Coroners' inquests returned 199 verdicts of “death from excessive drinking,” but in 1875, no less than 516 such verdicts were given.

Some statistics were also given on the other side of the question which, if true, shew that the much vaunted Gothenburg system is a very partial success. It is asserted that, although between 1865, when the experiment was first introduced, and 1868 the convictions for drunkenness fell from 2161 to 1320, yet that in 1874 they had, by a gradual but steady increase, reached 2234, being greater than they had been before the system was introduced. The explanation offered by one speaker, that the increase was due to the excessive high rate of wages prevailing in the district not unnaturally leads to the assertion that the previous diminution of drunkenness was due, not to the new licensing system, but to the low-rate of wages. The British Consul has lately reported that, though the system of Gothenburg was undoubtedly a financial success, its philanthropic objects had altogether failed. It seems impossible that the plan can succeed in both characters. Either philanthropy carries the day and the Corporation venture is, as far as direct returns are concerned, unremunerative, or greed and need carry the day, and philanthropy goes to the wall. But, in any case, before any of our towns adopt the system, it will be well to ascertain whether the damaging statistics which we have given above are to be relied on or can be refuted.

The question of how to relieve distress without pauperizing the recipients of alms has been proved a difficult one, and it seems to be in Canada particularly so; where, however, it has to be met and answered as speedily as possible. We have hitherto done without, and rejoiced to do without, a Poor Law, and if we had no poor our boasting and our rejoicing would be natural and reasonable; but as we have a large number of poor it may be questioned whether it be possible, if expedient, to get along much longer without such a law on the Statute Book. At present the large cities are at the mercy of the country districts, from which, in winter, all the poor gravitate towards the large centres. We are glad to see that in Toronto the whole question of improving the condition of the poor is to be fully considered during the coming summer.