

# THE WEEK.

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## TOPICS OF THE WEEK.

It is proposed that Mr. Mowat shall receive an ovation from his party on his triumphant return from England, and that the statue of Mr. George Brown shall be erected at the same time. Nothing can be more natural, or, from the party point of view, more proper. But we cannot help expressing a hope that this demonstration will be kept entirely clear of the Provincial Exhibition. In this war of parties, to which Canadians are so desperately addicted, and in which they are losing their real liberties as well as their sense of patriotism, there ought at least to be sometimes a truce. There ought to have been a truce at the time of the Semi-Centennial, but the peace was then broken by the U. E. Loyalists, as might have been foreseen when they were introduced into the programme. There ought to be a truce during the week of the Provincial Exhibition, when we all unite for the celebration and promotion of our common prosperity; but there will on the contrary be a carnival of mutual animosity and hatred, if the occasion is taken for reviving all the bitterness of the Boundary question and the rancorous memories which gather round the name of George Brown.

AGAIN and again the absurdity of the attempt to manufacture a petty aristocracy and a sham court in Canada has been indicated. With all the weight of his distinguished position, Lord Lorne fortunately discovered how utterly out of tune with the sentiments of the country was his attempt to introduce the forms of Old World Royalty into a democratic community, where forms and ceremonies, shorn of the historic symbolisms which attach to them in Europe, instead of impressing the people, move them to laughter. It is because of the growth of this spirit that each succeeding announcement of the creation of a Canadian Knight is received with less gravity, and that there is a general tendency to laugh when the fact is made public that some worthy colonial gentleman has been dubbed "Sir Knight," decorated with a scarlet-striped Saxon-blue ribbon, and is graciously permitted to wear the motto: *Auspicium melioris cævi*. Even in England the value of titles is constantly decreasing in the eyes of the public, whilst modern decorations are at a discount: so much so that many of the best public men refuse them as rewards for political services. It was for this reason that so much disappointment was felt at Tennyson's acceptance of a peerage. Mr. Gladstone, on the one side of politics, has repeatedly declined a title, and Mr. W. H. Smith, on the other side, won not a little admiration by his refusal to be "elevated." Apart from this view of the matter, no exception can be taken to the honour offered to the Hon. David L. Macpherson. So far as such decorations can be looked upon as rewards for political services, Mr. Macpherson, as a faithful henchman of Sir John A. Macdonald, may be regarded as a fitting recipient of the honour, his occupation of the successive positions of Speaker of the Senate and Assistant Minister of the Interior entitling him to remembrance in the distribution of political plums.

FROM certain statements put forward by Canadian Tory organs in discussing the legislative dead-lock in England, and judging from arguments advanced by them in the endeavour to score a point against Liberalism generally, it would seem that the writers have ideas of constitutional government equally hazy with those held by the aristocratic irreconcilables who, the other day, threw out the English Reform Bill. With an air of profound wisdom it is asserted that the Tories, and especially the Lords, are the real friends of the people—that Codlin's the friend, not Short—in

proof of which we are reminded that the Franchise Bill was only rejected by the House of Lords because that august assembly thought the people should be consulted before passing it. The transparent dishonesty of such a position on the part of a body of men who have bitterly opposed every popular reform that ever came before them is conveniently overlooked by our Tory contemporaries, who likewise ignore the fact that the equalization of the franchise was one of the most prominent questions before the electors in 1880. But the most remarkable thing in this connection is, that leading organs in the press of so democratic a country as Canada should be found preaching the doctrine—comprehensible in an order fighting for very existence—that, when an important measure is rejected by the House of Lords (or the Senate, let us say), the House of Lords (or Senate) has a right to demand an appeal to the country. Such a demand, on the contrary, ought to be firmly resisted in the interests of good legislation and in the interests of representative government. Has it occurred to those who justify this course what it would lead to? Whenever an important measure was sent to the Upper House, that measure would not be accepted or rejected on its merits, but would be adopted or refused by the Tory wire-pullers—for hereditary and appointive assemblies will always be Tory—upon their view whether it was a good or a bad time for a general election. Nothing could be more contrary to the spirit of representative government than that the majority of those who are not returned as representatives of the people should control the majority of those who are the representatives of the people. The taunt that Mr. Gladstone's Government are afraid to meet the constituencies could only be thrown out by those who are incapable of understanding the genius of the English people, or from less creditable causes. So strong an administration is not to be frightened by such assertions as that. It was truly and aptly said the other day by Mr. Fawcett, that, "long and illustrious as had been the life of Mr. Gladstone, he never would have rendered to his country a service so important as if he proved that the House of Lords might reject a bill once, twice and thrice without giving them the claim to determine when Parliament should be dissolved, and that the duty of advising her Majesty when there should be an appeal to the constituencies should be left solely in the hands of the Minister as long as he was supported by a majority of the people's representatives."

ENGLAND is to have no assistance from the great powers in the solution of the Egyptian difficulty. It was feared from the first that French jealousy would prove the rock upon which the diplomatic ship would split, and the result has justified the apprehension. So far as Mr. Gladstone's refusal to yield the *pas* to France is concerned, the Tories are said to approve of his policy, and the Liberals rejoice to have England unfettered. Naturally England's responsibilities in Egypt are vastly increased by the failure of the Conference to attain the objects hoped from it, and the news that forty thousand Abyssinian soldiers are on their way to the relief of Kassala, and three hundred British troops have been ordered to reinforce the garrison at Zeilah, is most opportune, as showing that the Government have, after all, adopted the quickest and most effectual means of assisting the garrisons in the Soudan. The troops borrowed by Admiral Hewett from King John of Abyssinia are composed of cavalry and infantry, brave, excellent shots, and each man capable of living for days upon a bag of flour, such as can be easily slung over the shoulder. They are armed with swords, flint-pieces or rifles, spears and shields. They are claimed to be equally brave and clever with the Mahdi's soldiers, with the advantage of being better marksmen. As ought to have been known to the party-blinded writers who have so diligently vilified the British Government for its "inaction," to despatch a British army to the Soudan at this moment—except for such guerilla service as is expected from those ordered to Zeilah—would be tantamount to sending many of them to certain death. The Egyptian soldier is unreliable; it would take too long to bring men from India; and under the circumstances the course taken must be acknowledged the only practicable one. Further comfort is to be extracted from the announcement that Stanley has—much to the disgust of the Tories, who have systematically discredited Mr. Gladstone's foreign policy—declared his belief that General Gordon is in no danger, and has several avenues of escape open to him if he should deem it advisable to retreat from Khartoum.