

# THE WEEK.

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## TOPICS OF THE WEEK.

THE Orange celebration appears to have been generally successful. In Toronto it was so, though the morning was unpromising. Everything about the procession and the subsequent festivities at the Exhibition grounds was perfectly orderly and creditable in every way to the Association and its cause. The formidable development of the force of Irish Catholicism in the political field, coupled with the attempt of the Parnellites to wreck the British Legislature and dismember the United Kingdom, has of late revived, in an unexpected manner, the practical importance of Orangeism, which seemed at one time to have become, for any but social and convivial purposes, almost a thing of the past. The necessity of political societies may be deplored by others besides Mr. Blake; but there are sometimes dangers which in such communities as ours, and under the elective system of government, can really be met in no other way. With regard to the compact organization and the political activity of Roman Catholicism, as well as of Fenianism, there can of course be no sort of doubt. Not a symptom appeared in the recent Canadian celebrations of any disposition to revive the violence of bygone days, or to meet Roman Catholic encroachment and Fenian conspiracy by any other than legal means. The danger against which the Orangemen have to guard if they wish to exercise real influence, and against which the best of them are evidently trying to guard, is the prostitution of their order to the purposes of a political party. They cannot serve two masters, the dispenser of patronage and the cause of Protestant liberty, at the same time. One thing, however, must have struck every spectator of the array of Saturday last. Disunionists and Roman Catholics who talk of Ireland as if it were all their own, and of their cause as the Irish cause, forget that there is another Ireland, which is very far from being theirs or sympathizing with their cause, though it has in it the very thews and sinews of the country.

EXPERIENCE seems to have fully justified the opinions of those who would have dissuaded us from spending money on a circulating library, recommending us to confine ourselves to the establishment of a library of reference, with a first-class librarian to guide study, and of public reading-rooms. The reading-rooms are very successful, and there is every reason to believe that the library of reference will be equally so, as soon as the system is in running order, the librarian being in the opinion of the most competent judges a man eminently suited for his post. But it is found, as was predicted by those who understood the subject, that of the books

taken out from the circulating library more than two-thirds are novels. This is not a proper expenditure of public money, especially when people broken down with labour are being sent to gaol to save them from starving. It is more than wasteful, for it stimulates a morbid taste which has already acquired a most baneful hold on many, especially on ladies, who are the chief consumers of this kind of literature. Novels are now printed so cheap that any person may buy as many as are good for him or for her without assistance out of the taxes. But as a rule, when people buy literature it is of a class superior to novels, and in this respect again the circulating library, which is likely to diminish the purchase of books, is of doubtful utility as a mode of promoting the intellectual progress of the people.

THERE is one point in connection with the discussions upon Canadian Independence which is overlooked by both advocates and opponents of that possibility. It appears to be taken for granted that Canada is the sole arbiter of her own destiny, and that so long as she prefers to remain a British Colony that condition will continue and be acquiesced in by the Mother Country. It is even conceded that, were Canada to ask for Independence, the English Government would not deny the request, though the impression seems to be general that nothing less would bring the question within the range of practical English politics. But, much pride as is felt in her prosperous colony by England, the latter country is beginning to see that she has acquitted herself of all reasonable parental responsibilities, and to think that Canada is "of age" and should no longer claim a minor's privileges. Further, England is hampered in at least one means of dealing with the Irish difficulty by the knowledge that a rupture with the United States would expose Canada to invasion as a British Colony—a condition of things equally embarrassing to both countries—to the child, who would suffer for a parent's misfortune, and to the parent who, with hands full, must yet defend a child attacked solely on account of the relationship. Does anyone suppose that the British Government would not have been able more freely to demand that America should cease tacitly to permit dynamite plots to be hatched in the Republic had it not been for the contiguity of Canada, with her long and practically indefensible border-line? Fenian manifestoes show that this fact is constantly present in the minds of the bloodthirsty wretches who plan murder to keep up subscriptions to the dynamite fund. It would be well, then, in debating the future of Canada, to take into account the fact that there is a wide-spread feeling in England in favour of inviting Canada—and indeed other colonies—to set up shop for herself—to become independent. It must be confessed, however, that the advanced party who advocate the severance do not indicate how a country composed of such discordant elements as the Dominion is to maintain Confederation, especially alongside a powerful neighbour with whom a much larger number of Canadians than is commonly supposed are inclined to fuse politically for mutual commercial benefits.

Now it is Ottawa that is threatening to celebrate. There is danger of this sort of thing being done *ad nauseam*. What with Carnivals, Centennials, Semi-dittos, National and Provincial fêtes, and the rest, even the appetite for proclaiming itself natural to a nation justly proud of its rapid progress must be more than satisfied. "Hundreds of thousands of visitors have been attracted to Montreal and Toronto, and thousands of dollars have consequently flown into the pockets of their citizens," says the *Ottawa Sun*. The latter part of the quotation is not corroborated by the business men of Toronto. Indeed, viewed from the economic standpoint, the Semi-Centennial is an acknowledged fizzle, and curses not loud but deep have been vented by many who were induced, in hopes of a good harvest, to contribute liberally to the expenses pool. Our Ottawa friends think the thirty-ninth Provincial Exhibition, which is dated for September 22nd to 27th, might be extended so as to attract "thousands of visitors" (with their thousands of dollars) to that city. Every one would be glad to see that prediction fulfilled. It is suggested that "Exhibition week should be made a great carnival at the capital. The city should be clean swept and garnished, flags should float from every building, there should be free open-air concerts, fireworks, balloon ascensions, anything and everything that will have the effect of attracting visitors. No city in Canada," adds our contemporary, "has so many natural attractions for the visitor."