

We offer a cordial greeting to our new U. S. Consul-General in Montreal. We are already, by instinct, old friends, as we think we have heard his name before; and we further congratulate the States on the homage shown to literature, in the nomination of such men as James Russel Lowell and Bayard Taylor to the Ministerships at Madrid and Berlin respectively.

The city of Montreal is fast passing into the hands of the rowdies. It is scarcely a matter for wonder. Rowdism has ruled in the Provincial Parliament—in this city's Corporation, very often in the Press, and now it is taking possession of the streets. For peaceable citizens to attend a concert involves danger to life and limb. The crack of a revolver is quite ordinary—to beat a man within an inch of his life a thing of constant occurrence. This began on the 12th July last, was baptized, blessed and made safe by the action of the famous Grand Jury. It is coming to this—the citizens must take measures to protect themselves, if the authorities will not protect them.

The prospects and promises of peace are fast crystallising into assumed facts. We have steadily held to the opinion that England would not go to war, in spite of the roaring Tory press at home, and the absurd articles of the Tory press here—which revealed nothing but an almost complete ignorance of the whole question—and the vapourings of some lecturers who can find only fault in Russia and seem to be greatly in love with the Turk—on account of his faith it may be. From first to last—if the last has come—England has had no just occasion for war. Her interests have never been so much as threatened. We do not profess to greatly admire Russia; but we hate the Turkish Empire so thoroughly—we loathe its foulness so deeply, that we give God thanks that by any means the one is broken up and the other moved out of Europe. The Turk has been a long standing curse to the whole continent, and all good men and true should rejoice in the issue of the war. Russia has reduced her claims and brought them well within the range of the possible. In demanding a war indemnity English bondholders will not be interfered with. As to Russian acquisition of territory, there is nothing in the demands to create alarm. Batoum, Kars, Ardahan and the district of Byazid are to be ceded; the question of the Straits is reserved for further consideration; the river Danube will be open to navigation as before. So no British interest is put at risk as to territory. A zone will be left between Montenegro and Servia to enable the Porte to maintain communication between Bosnia and the Herzegovina; while Bulgaria, including Bourgas, Varna and Kustendje, but not Salonica nor Adrianople, will be a free state, ruled by a prince chosen from none of the reigning European families. Where is the cause for war in all this? Will the *Montreal Gazette* and others of the kind tell us now what was the interest on behalf of which they so bravely demanded war with Russia.

Does the *Phare de Bosphore* really speak truthfully when it assures us that "The Russian Cabinet has had a sum of 1,800,000 roubles placed at its disposal by the Government for the bribery of European newspapers?" "Russia has in her service about 79 papers: 16 in France; 28 in Germany; 7 in Bohemia; 14 in Austria; and last, but not least, 14 in England." We should like to see an authentic list of the latter.

Amongst our brethren in the United States, (will they henceforth be known as the *Argentine Republic*?), notwithstanding the clash of arms on Mr. Bland's bill, they find breathing space to announce that "members of Congress who voted for the bill will be delighted to learn that arrangements have been made at the mints for the immediate coinage of silver dollars, so that there may be a supply of the coveted and patriotic coin with which to pay their salaries." All this being settled, we trust to their entire satisfaction, it is proposed now, in the same Congress, to substitute by an amendment to the constitution, a triple for a single national executive; or in other words, to exchange the President for an executive board. This plural executive is not a new proposition. One of the ablest of America's statesmen, John C. Calhoun, advocated a dual executive with all the ingenuity of his powerful intellect. Even from him it was regarded as impracticable, and the proposition soon ceased to be discussed. We fancy the triumvirate as proposed by Mr. Southard, of Ohio, is not likely to meet a much better fate.

The Presbyterianism of Scotland is still in great trouble. Mr. Fergus Ferguson carries on his case with veritable Scotch pertinacity. He has impeached the Standards, denied the Scripturalness of some portions of the Confession, and generally put Orthodoxy in peril. Mr. Ferguson is scarcely in the first rank of theologians, judging from the pamphlet he has issued containing a statement of his views and a vindication of his position; but he has ability, and is an honest and earnest man. Two great qualities are those, and will help him. When Mr. Ferguson is disposed of other cases will follow. So it will go on—and the end is not yet.

ECCLESIASTICAL FINANCE.

There is, of course, a side of church life which is beyond all calculation and all figures. Arithmetic can have nothing to do with it, for it is moral and spiritual, as inward thought and sentiment producing great and good conduct. That is the root, idea and first work of all churches. It is true that men often attempt to bring calculations into that region, making count of converts, &c., but they blunder and sin by so doing. Life cannot be valued and set down in figures; conduct is not a thing for the market. The action of a Church must be twofold; first, on its own members, to deepen and broaden their thought of God; to quicken their affection for truth and absolute justice, and to train them in the way of thinking right and doing right for God's sake and their own; and then, through their means, on others outside of themselves; a work for the drunkard, and beggar, and thief—for the proud, and the lustful, and the morally blind. The greater and truer the piety of the Church, the greater and truer will be its zeal in carrying on operations outside.

The inside and the outside work to be done involve organization; and organization means business of the kind men carry on every day in the office and warehouse. And as a rule that of the Churches is most loosely conducted. The clergy are popularly supposed to know nothing about it (as a rule that popular supposition is correct), and men, who in their own private concerns are discreet and careful enough seem to forget most of their discretion and care when they handle the affairs of a Church. Of course they have a large faith in a kind Providence, and that must count for something. They believe that the Church, as to its organization and administration, is under the supreme control of heaven, and they hardly care to deal overmuch in figures when such is the case. But all their faith notwithstanding, we do protest that the business of a Church should be conducted on sound business principles. Ecclesiastical speculation in the matter of building churches, &c., is just as bad as any other kind of speculation. Ecclesiastical debt is just as unwarrantable as any other kind of debt. Churches have no more right to incur responsibilities for those who shall follow them, than parents have the right to build big houses and leave a heavy mortgage for the sons to pay.

Montreal at this present affords a good, or bad, illustration of the current notion of business as to ecclesiastical matters. We have a Protestant population numbering about fifty thousand. To an unusual degree they are church-goers, say to the amount of two-thirds, or in round numbers 27,000. It is generally computed that one half of the ordinary church-goers can attend at one time. Say 14,000 in Montreal may be looked for at service time. By reference to the directory it will be seen that more than fifty places of worship are thrown open for that fourteen thousand worshippers, or about 300 for each church, if equally divided. Some of the churches are large, speaking now of the buildings, some are small, while the majority of them will seat more than twice the number they can claim, if it should come to equalisation. Come to that it cannot, and so many are but meagrely filled.

Church debts abound. The majority of the buildings have to bear the depressing, and disheartening, burden of a heavy mortgage. A great misfortune as we think, for it means a constant drain upon the current income, an anxious treasurer, and a still more anxious minister. The one panacea is a well-filled church, good collections, and a people able and willing to bear the constant strain the treasurer is compelled to put upon them. But to get the well-filled church, that is the difficulty. Extraordinary pulpit ability is hardly equal to it, for the community is small, leaving but little surplus population to draw upon. The good fortune of one is the misfortune of some others. What then? Why the practice of what in business is called "touting." The minister has to see to it that the members of his flock do not wander to other churches. If a stranger should appear he must make the very earliest call upon him to extend a welcome and create an interest. That stranger finds himself lifted into some importance. A place has been waiting for him, a large circle of people quite ready to love him, and bless him if—he will only take a pew. Is he fond of social life? He is invited out every night for a month. The doctrines of the church are quite unexceptionable, and, the pews comfortable. A family coming to Montreal may well be pitied—for that family, if known to be church-going, will be almost wrangled over. It would be quite easy to give examples of personal appeals being made, even letters of entreaty written.

What harm? Not any, if a church is simply an institution which must pay its way—if heads are to be counted, and such like things. But, if a church is to be the living centre of lofty work—if the ministry is to be an honourable and holy thing—if the minister is to be the head of an organization for doing Christ's work—then great harm, because great indignity and great shame. The man who has to keep his pews filled by such methods is not free at all—but a shame to members and the exchequer. He must not only preach to please, but must visit to please. And the people who do such "touting" are not a great people at all, but a mean little people, capable of doing any mean little thing—but not capable of doing anything very great or very good.