

# THE WEEK.

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## CONTENTS OF CURRENT NUMBER.

	PAGE.
TOPICS OF THE WEEK .....	17
Our Reception.—A Minister of Railways and a High Commissioner.—The International Railway.—The Hudson Bay Outlet.—The Chief Librarian of the Toronto Public Library.—Mr. Matthew Arnold in Boston.—The American Navy and Coast Defences.—The Democratic Plank.	
CONTRIBUTED ARTICLES .....	18
Current Events and Opinions..... <i>A Bystander.</i> The C. P. R. by way of the Kicking Horse Pass and the Selkirks..... <i>Principal Grant.</i>	
LITERATURE .....	22
An Idyl of the Season..... <i>Charles Pelham Mulvany.</i> Triplets..... <i>Seranus.</i> The Adventures of a Widow..... <i>Edgar Fawcett.</i> The Track..... <i>Charles G. D. Roberts.</i> Readings from New Books.	
ART, MUSIC, AND THE DRAMA .....	25
The Romany Rye.—Joukousky's Portrait of Liszt.—Notes.	
BOOK NOTICES .....	26
Maurice Thompson's "Songs of Fair Weather."—Trollope's Autobiography.—Osborn's "Ancient Egypt."	
THE PERIODICALS .....	27
LITERARY GOSSIP .....	28
CHRONICLE OF THE WEEK .....	29

## The Week,

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## TOPICS OF THE WEEK.

THE kind and appreciative reception which has so far been accorded to THE WEEK by its contemporaries, seems to call for a word of grateful acknowledgment on our part. Setting out as we are upon a path in some respects entirely different from all those hitherto trodden by Canadian journalism—a path which, faithfully followed, is liable at any time to place us in an attitude of strenuous, though respectful, opposition to either of the two great parties by whose differing opinions and aims the community is divided—it is certainly pleasant to be welcomed with encouragement alike from Reformers and Liberal Conservatives. This shows confidence in the sincerity of our aim and approval of the aim itself, which is to furnish instruction and wholesome entertainment for our reading classes, and to have but one policy—that of stimulating our national sentiment, guarding our national morality, and strengthening our national growth. The columns of THE WEEK will always be hospitably open for the discussion of topics of general interest, from whatever standpoint, political or social, they may be surveyed; provided always that the discussion be carried on under obedience to those rules of courtesy and considerations of fitness by which all right-thinking men would wish to be bound.

SIR CHARLES TUPPER is now on his way from England to resume his place during the coming session as a member of Parliament, and a Minister of the Government. Had an object sufficient for his attendance before been wanting, it is now surely present in the promised return to the House of Commons of Sir Richard Cartwright, whose least word seems to act as an irritant to the temper of Sir Charles. Sir Charles will, besides appearing in the character of special antagonist to Sir Richard, present to the House of Commons the unique and hitherto unseen spectacle of minister of Government and servant of Government in one; nor will this abnormal guise vanish on reflecting that he draws salary for only one of his two

positions, since duty, not reward, is the vital condition of office. The supposition hardly needs restatement that Sir Charles' foreign domiciliation is the outcome of French hostility to him in the cabinet, and curiosity on that point is quiescent; but it is not stilled yet on the problem of his retention to ministerial functions, in the face of obviously logical protest. Some suggest that the man is not at hand to fill his place; the truth may turn out to be that he is much too near at hand.

THE matter of subsidizing the International Railroad is provoking some comment just now. In Ontario it seems inclined to become a party question. In western New Brunswick it is nothing of the sort. It might be a very different matter if the Intercolonial were not yet built. Now it is an established fact, and indispensable to the inhabitants of the counties bordering on the Gulf. The new line will take little more from the traffic of the Intercolonial than it will from the traffic of what was formerly the St. John and Maine line, and from the lines connecting Montreal and Portland. Intercourse between Ontario and western New Brunswick is mainly carried on by way of Montreal and Portland, as it is, and the Intercolonial has not so much to lose in this direction as might at first appear. There is no trade of ours to be diverted into American channels by the new road, as both western New Brunswick and the eastern townships have already all the facilities they could desire for trading with the Maine ports. The Canadian trade passing over the road will be almost exclusively through trade. From the opening up of that portion of the State of Maine, through which the road will run, New Brunswick and the eastern townships have as much to gain as the State has. And the very great convenience of direct communication with the West will be obtained by those parts of New Brunswick and Nova Scotia which are already in possession of, and using, a way much less indirect than the Intercolonial.

IT now seems to be settled that the railroad, so long considered impracticable, between Winnipeg and Hudson Bay, is to be built, and the time to be occupied in construction is fixed at three years. The engineering difficulties are said to be trifling; there is little if any rock cutting and the grading will be singularly easy as the line will follow the valley of the Nelson for the greater part of the way. The company is hopeful of the local traffic to be developed along the proposed road, but this falls into insignificance compared with the greater object of shortening the distance between Europe and the grain fields of the North-West. How important that object will be is revealed when we consider that the distance from Winnipeg to Liverpool via Montreal is 4,140 miles, from Winnipeg to Liverpool via New York 4,652 miles, while the length of the route by way of Hudson Bay is only 3,539 miles, with a shorter sea voyage than by either of the other ways.

MOST Toronto readers of THE WEEK have no need to be reminded of the "tempest in a tea-pot" which was stirred up early in the summer by the appointment of Mr. James Bain, jr., to the Librarianship of the Toronto Public Library. Officious friends of a rival candidate told us that the Board had made a bad appointment, and that the Library project would ignominiously collapse. Though our own sympathies were with another candidate, whose claims for the position none could question, we had no misgivings as to the appointment that had been made. The return of Mr. Bain from his purchasing tour in England, with a haul of books in his net that would make the mouth water of every bibliophile in the country, will, we are confident, amply justify the selection of Mr. Bain for the responsible position of Librarian-in-chief. The appointee of the Board is not only, *par excellence*, a bookseller, but he has a wide acquaintance with literature and literary matters, and possesses an intimate knowledge of book-men and book-haunts. This has been of great service in the Librarian's mission to England. The range of Mr. Bain's purchases for the Library is extensive, and has been made with the view of meeting the varied practical wants of the community, so far as the money at his disposal would permit. The purchases, we learn, do not exceed \$15,000, and better value, we think, could hardly have been commanded for the money. From the result of our own observation, and from the testimony of an expert in book-craft, we feel free to say, that there are few outside the regular book-trade of London, who could more efficiently and with