

THE WEEK.

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G. T. B.'s
Views.

We have received the following interesting letter on the Remedial Bill from a prominent Canadian whose views and opinions are always of great interest. The communication is signed with the well-known initials, G. T. B.:—"It is surprising that notwithstanding all the eloquence and criticism expended upon the Manitoba controversy, one of the most important points, if not the most important, should pass almost unnoticed. Of course, if the contention of some people that the question is an open one, and that the only point involved is whether we want Separate Schools or no is correct, then anyone may take sides according to his inclination and no harm is done. But in view of the fact that the judgment of the Privy Council in terms affirms that the Roman Catholic minority of Manitoba have a grievance and that that grievance should be redressed, it is difficult to conceive of any honest man holding the opinion that we may do as we please with reference to that grievance, viz., redress it or not. Now, what I wish to point out is the very serious effect likely to be produced not upon the illiterate and uncultivated classes alone, but upon all the orders of society by urging them to refuse that redress which the law requires should be given. Five minutes' conversation with any average layman will show a lawyer that he has no accurate knowledge of the real bearings of the question, which is a purely legal one. I constantly see that clergymen address their congregations against the proposed remedial measure, and yet I venture to affirm that not one of these gentlemen could give a lawyer a list of the documents that bear upon the controversy much less affirm that he had read them, even assuming his capacity to interpret them. In this category are some Methodist divines whose remarks I have seen in the daily papers. Fancy John Wesley being guilty of conduct of this kind! It is the last thing in the world he would have done. He would have been the first to perceive and affirm what is the most serious aspect of this controversy, viz.: that to undermine the foundations of public authority, to impugn the binding character of a solemn public engagement, and above all to debauch the masses from their allegiance to law and order were crimes in comparison with which the question of whether there should be a few separate schools in Manitoba sink into utter insignificance. We have, in respect for constituted authority, so far maintained an honourable pre-eminence over our neighbours to the South, among whom, as we all know, there is a lawlessness which shocks us. But if we are confronted with such exhibitions as are now taking place in which men of talent and authority in the community inculcate the doctrine that we are to abide by the law only so long and in so far as it comports with our own wishes, then we must be prepared to see the same evidences of restiveness and chafing under restraint which we deplore elsewhere. It should be the mission of Protestant divines to condemn these doctrines and to enforce the duty of implicit obedience to constituted authority without reference to consequences. Diatribes against the Church of Rome are utterly out of place and beside the question, even if they were marked by a spirit of Christian charity or truthfulness either in conception or delivery. The fact is that the Roman Catholic minority of Manitoba hold a promissory note against us, and it is no answer to their suit

Current Topics.

Mr. Gilbert Parker
Banqueted.

The banquet given to Mr. Gilbert Parker, at the Toronto National Club, on Monday evening last, was an event of great interest.

The spirited and accurate report of the speeches which appeared in *The Globe* the following morning was an excellent piece of work, but only those who were present could appreciate the full charm and novelty of the evening's entertainment. A banquet in honour of a Canadian man of letters is a rare event here, especially one graced by the presence of so many prominent men. The Lieutenant Governor of Ontario, the Minister of Education, the distinguished Principal of Upper Canada College, vied with one another in paying tribute to the Canadian novelist whose fame has spread throughout the length and breadth of the English-speaking world. Colonel Denison, Mr. Oliver Howland, M.P.P., Mr. J. S. Willison, Mr. Frank Arnold, Q.C., and Mr. A. F. Pirie in the course of their happy speeches said many things which "were pretty to observe" concerning their warm appreciation of the gifts and virtues of the guest of the evening. The applause which greeted every reference to Mr. Parker was only equalled by the applause which greeted every reference to Canada and Imperial Unity the love of our country, and the pride in our British citizenship. Literature has its part to play in Imperial Unity, and Mr. Parker is keenly alive to this fact. The keynote of his admirable speech was the appreciation of the true spirit of manhood, of citizenship, and of nationality. He greatly impressed those present by his evident sincerity and modesty, as well as by his intellectual strength and his grace of manner. The highest literary eminence is seldom attainable by men who stand aloof from the world of affairs, and we are glad to note that Mr. Parker's interest in national and Imperial concerns is not merely academic. He has done much for Canada already and will do yet more. As Fenimore Cooper introduced Americans and their country to the old world so is Gilbert Parker introducing Canadians and their country to the peoples beyond the shores of his beloved native land.