

THE WEEK.

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The Week,

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TOPICS OF THE WEEK.

THE news that Alfred Tennyson had consented to be "raised" to the peerage, under the title of Baron Tennyson D'Eyncourt, could not be expected to affect his admirers at first otherwise than disagreeably. To be told that one who, for a quarter of a century at least, had been receiving the homage of the Anglo-Saxon world, could deem himself capable of acquiring any added distinction from the conferment of a title shared with him by very ordinary men, was to discover the feet of clay belonging to the golden idol. It may well be, however, that Alfred Tennyson has looked for no increase of fame from his new rank. It would perhaps in his case have savoured of the snob to refuse the tribute of an admiring court. The need a smaller celebrity would be under of shunning the factitious distinction of a title lest his intrinsic claims should be forgotten, is a need that could hardly exist for Alfred Tennyson, whose greatness is so assured that no serious question of precedence can ever arise between his own dignity and that of his rank. He can afford to accept any title, secure in the knowledge that in the eyes of the world at large the title, not he, will be the chief gainer by his acceptance.

At University College on Friday evening the students held a public debate on the resolution that "Imperial Federation would be advantageous to Canada." Mr. Blake occupied the chair, and in giving his judgment for the affirmative made a speech which summarized the arguments on both sides, and his reasons for the verdict. He pointed out the notable and suggestive fact that throughout the discussion Federation of the Empire had been referred to as an alternative not of the present colonial status—which, as a permanent condition, was quietly ignored by both sides—but of Independence, or the extremely remote possibility of Annexation. The speeches in the negative were forcible, but effective rather against certain details, which the speakers took to be inseparable from a scheme of Fed-

eration, than against the general scheme itself; and on this ground Mr. Blake based his judgment. The strength of a scheme, however, like that of a chain, is in its weakest link; and we cannot but believe that in matters of detail will be found the forever insurmountable obstacles to Imperial Federation, which an English writer on the colonies lately declared would be, if not impossible, at least, to Englishmen, intolerable. Though Mr. Blake's speech told strongly for the affirmative, he stated that his judgment was given in opposition to his own predilections.

WITHIN the past few months two letters have appeared in the *Toronto Globe*, both written by Canadians now under arrest at the Guard House in Minnesota, for desertion from the United States army; and since the information contained in these letters forms a subject with which it is the duty of our Canadian Government to concern itself, we shall re-state the grievances therein alleged:—Three men, who it appears were Canadians, deserted from the United States army, and crossed over into Dominion territory where they considered themselves safe from molestation, under the protection of international law; but a detachment of United States soldiers pursued, crossed the line, and arrested the confiding refugees over twenty miles on the Canadian side of the boundary line, and hurried them back in irons, for trial, to Assiniboine, Montana Territory. One of the three, Henry Watson, now writes from Fort Snelling, Minnesota, describing the cruel treatment to which, as he alleges, the prisoners have been subjected at Fort Assiniboine, where they were tried and found guilty. They were kept in irons, and treated with various forms of illusage from the date of their arrest, which does not appear, up to the middle of October last. So severe was the overtaking and the punishment threatened, that one of the prisoners, Ellsworth, escaped from the Fort and made his way towards the boundary; but in a storm that came on, he perished, and was afterwards found upon the plains, his body nearly devoured by coyotes or wolves. Two still remain in confinement; one is Henry Watson, of Nova Scotia, the other Franklyn Switzer, of Kingston, Ontario. Now, revolting though the alleged treatment of these prisoners may sound, and much as the death of poor Ellsworth in the storm might be calculated to move Canadians to indignation, that with which we are most concerned is the flagrant breach of international law, in the forcible seizure of men, who whether Canadians or American citizens, were entitled at the time of their arrest to the protection of our flag. We believe that there is not any room to doubt that the seizure was made over twenty miles at the Canadian side of the boundary line, and it can hardly seem credible to us that the Canadian Government should be, for months, in possession of the information and not have asked for an explanation, and done what else was fitting and their duty as custodians of our national rights and honour. The breach of international law is none the less in this seizure of American deserters on Canadian soil, than it was when Captain Humphreys took forcible possession of the British blue-jackets on the *Chesapeake*, and for that act the Imperial Government made every possible apology and superseded their admiral; nor is it less flagrant than the act of the American war vessel, *San Jacinto*, in taking Mason and Slidell from the English mail steamer *Trent*, which action President Lincoln promptly condemned, saying, "We shall have to give the men up and apologize for what we have done." It is not to the purpose here, though it would only point to a fact, to imagine the cry of indignation that would have been raised through the United States had some of our Canadian volunteers forcibly seized deserters from our flag on American territory; but it is to the purpose to call attention to the Government's plain duty, which is to promptly seek for explanation in a matter touching the national rights and honour, of which they are now the custodians.

THE Legislature of British Columbia has passed resolutions restricting the immigration of Chinese, and the chief reasons put forward for such a step are that there are now upon the mainland not fewer than three thousand destitute Chinamen who have begun to murder and steal; and that the Caucasian population is not large enough to absorb the alien and uncongenial element presenting itself in what seems ever-increasing instalments. The less weighty and worthy argument that the cheap labour of the Mongolians puts Canadian workmen at grievous disadvantage was brought forward by the politicians who legislate only for votes. While we have no sympathy with the cry raised periodically against the influx