

Dominion Churchman.

THURSDAY, MARCH 22, 1877.

THE WEEK.

“FOR many years, as a pew-owner, I have voted at the Easter elections for wardens and vestry. In future I am to be called on, if any one wishes to annoy me, to make the following affirmation: ‘I do solemnly and sincerely declare that I am a member of the Church of England in the diocese of Fredericton and belong to no other religious denomination and am entitled to vote in this election.’” Churchmen in the western dioceses of Canada will be both amused and surprised at hearing that the above quotation is not a hoax, but that several persons in St. John, New Brunswick, deliberately regard the proposed enforcement of the above declaration as a grievous infringement of their rights. If a person claimed to vote at a meeting of the shareholders of a bank or of a building society, or any other mercantile association, he might possibly be annoyed, but he would assuredly have no reason to complain, were he a man of common sense and honesty, that he was called upon to prove his right to vote. Why in ecclesiastical matters a different rule should obtain we are unable to comprehend. Perhaps the sting is in the tail, in the declaration that the would-be voter “belongs to no other religious denomination;” for we have heard of instances of persons who have deemed that a sound Protestantism gave them the right of *entree* to any Protestant congregation. But it is assuredly time to enforce this stipulation that a churchman, whatever his feelings may be towards other denominations, must be a churchman and nothing else. The Church of England, we are often told, stands in no different position from that of the other sects in Canada. Be it so. All that the Church demands of the State is the right to manage its own affairs, and one of the chiefest of these rights is the right, based on common sense and honesty, to exclude non-members from interfering in its affairs. The New Brunswick grumbler, from whose letter we have quoted, will no doubt be surprised to hear that at the last session of the Synod of the diocese of Toronto, the vestry of free-seat churches, with which alone the Synod could deal, was restricted to members of the Church of England, who are also communicants—a restriction which met with the approval of a large majority of the lay delegates representing the various shades of opinion of which the Church is constituted.

It is neither our business nor our purpose to indicate our approval or our disapproval of the political views of which the Toronto *Globe* is the recognized exponent. But it is notorious that its editor never lets pass an opportunity of vilifying and ridiculing the Church of England, and such an opportunity it has found in the mission services lately held in St. James’s Church. Scribblers of

the style which that one affects who conducts the *Globe’s* ecclesiastical policy pride themselves much more on smartness and virulence than accuracy and logic, whilst the quality called Charity is utterly unknown to them. Professing to rejoice over every breaking down of the barriers that keep asunder the several sects of Christians, the writer, as usual, takes the opportunity of misrepresenting those who dare to differ from himself. Of all intolerance there is none so terrible as that of those who have no distinctive belief. To dare to believe is to such persons the most objectionable and unpermissible thing that a man can do: while to maintain that creeds are the obsolete records of worn-out bigotry is to them the highest form of what they dare to call Christianity. If the writer thinks that, from anything he may have lately seen or heard, the Church is about to throw down all her fences and open her churches and her pulpits to ministers and laymen of any or of no denomination, he is woefully mistaken. What the Church has been, that she will be. If for a time and for a particular purpose she allows a certain elasticity in her services, it is not an intimation that she regards her time-honoured ritual and liturgy as troublesome restrictions upon her usefulness.

The powers conferred by the Khedive of Egypt upon Colonel Gordon are very extensive. Hitherto, Sir Samuel Baker, Colonel Gordon and others who were employed in restricting the Slave trade in Equatorial Africa were themselves restricted in turn by the Government officials lower down the Nile, who connived at and indeed abetted the Slave traders in their evasions or infractions of the regulations for the suppression of that traffic. But now Colonel Gordon himself says: “I am astonished at the powers His Highness has placed in my hands. With the Governor-Generalship of the Soudan it will be my fault if Slavery does not cease, and if those vast countries are not open to the world. So there is an end of Slavery, if God will, for the whole secret of the matter is in the Government of the Soudan, and if the man who holds that Government is against it, it must cease.” That “Chinese Gordon” is just the man to wield, to the advantage of the world, the vast powers entrusted to him those who have watched his career have the fullest confidence. It has often been regretted that the services of so valuable an officer have, for so many years, been utilized by foreign powers, but England will cheerfully give him up for a time if he can achieve the noble work which is now placed in his hands.

For some reasons of his own—and His Holiness is in some matters very far-seeing—the Pope is desirous of shewing exceptional favors to England, probably because he finds in England that true toleration which is non-existent in some of the most liberal as well as the illiberal states of Europe. Monsignor Howard, at one time an officer in the

Life Guards, but for twenty-two years a Romish priest, and for five years Archbishop of Neo-Casaria, is shortly to receive the scarlet hat. The new Cardinal is well and favorably known at Rome. He is an accomplished linguist, a warm supporter of Pio Nono, and a man of great moral influence.

The recent scene at a Sunday morning service at St. James’, Hatcham, was truly pitiable and disgraceful. A large number of parishioners attended the church, as they had a perfect right to do. They do not seem to have very closely followed the services, but otherwise their behaviour was seemly enough. At the close of the Litany the majority of them rose to leave the church, as they certainly had a right to do, though it might have been in better taste, under the circumstances, not to have done so. This action, however, seems to have been peculiarly distasteful to the so-called “Protestant League,” which appears to have taken Hatcham under its peculiar protection; and the exit of those wishing to leave was very forcibly and vigorously opposed by those who assume the right to “regulate public worship” in the Church of England. To promote an unseemly brawl in God’s House is a somewhat peculiar way of protesting against Romanizing tendencies, though it is one to which certain paid and paying agitators very frequently resort. For a National Church to be under the thumb of a National Parliament, comprising among its members Jews, Infidels, Heretics, some people think is bad enough, but that it should be also tyrannized over by national rowdies is simply insufferable. The “aggrieved parishioners” appealed to the law, and the law has endorsed and remedied their grievance. We neither approve of the law, nor of the ritual excesses of Mr. Tooth, but Lord Penzance’s law is far preferable to mob law, and it is rather hard on Mr. Tooth’s flock to be subjected to both. We are fain to believe that the wirepullers of the Protestant League have no connection with the Church in whose proceedings they are pleased to manifest so unseemly an interest.

The suit against Mr. Bodington of Wolverhampton has been dismissed by Lord Penzance on the ground that notice of the proceedings was not served upon the defendant within the prescribed time. It will be remembered that, in this case, the accused clergyman had conformed the ritual of his church to the expressed wishes of his Diocesan, that the congregations of his two churches, which they had built themselves, were thoroughly in accord with their clergyman; but that, notwithstanding, the formal petition of three railway clerks which, in consequence of the Bishop of Lichfield being patron of the living, was forwarded to the Archbishop of Canterbury, was at once accepted by His Grace, and the machinery of law immediately put in motion against Mr. Bodington. It is by an accident that another case of the