

THE WEEK:

A CANADIAN JOURNAL OF POLITICS, SOCIETY, AND LITERATURE.

Second Year.
Vol. II., No. 25.

Toronto, Thursday, May 21st, 1885.

\$3.00 per Annum.
Single Copies, 10 cents.

CONTENTS OF CURRENT NUMBER.

TOPICS OF THE WEEK—	PAGE.
Rewards for Volunteers.....	385
The Half-breed Insurrection Suppressed.....	385
Obstruction in Parliament.....	385
The Senate a Retreat for Superannuated Politicians.....	386
Canon Farrar on Abstinence and Prohibition.....	386
Wine and Beer not Poison.....	386
The Scott Act Subversive of the Fundamental Principles of Justice.....	387
Bible Wines.....	387
Ungentlemanly Journalism.....	387
Difficulty of Defending the British Empire.....	387
Herat not the Key to India.....	388
Renewal of the Crimes Act in Ireland.....	388
Another French Revolution Pending.....	388
Mark Pattison's Memoirs.....	388
CONTRIBUTED ARTICLES—	
The Captive Insurgent Chief.....	390
Too Much Partyism.....	G. C. C. 390
Royal Canadian Academy Exhibition.....	Mahlstick. 390
The Churches.....	Asterisk. 391
HERE AND THERE.....	391
CORRESPONDENCE.....	393
POETRY—	
Toronto's Glorious Dead.....	H. K. Cockin. 394
Before Batoche ("Songs from the Front.").....	Nathanael Nix. 394
COLOUR-TASTES (Selected).....	394
ARCHDEACON FARRAR ON PROHIBITION (Selected).....	395
MUSIC—	
"Elijah" at Ottawa.....	395
"The Mikado".....	395
PERIODICALS.....	396
BOOKS.....	396
LITERARY GOSSIP.....	396
CHESS.....	397

TOPICS OF THE WEEK.

In clearing the rifle-pits at Batoche by a bayonet charge the Volunteers must be admitted to have done their duty most gallantly. General Middleton, who is not given to gush, bestows a high encomium upon them. The charge which dislodged the insurgents, came after three days' hard fighting and a good deal of endurance. The Volunteers have earned some recognition of their services beyond their ordinary pay, and we trust that the Government will see its way to making a grant of a quarter-section of land to every man of them. There is plenty of land out of which to make the grant, and it could not be put to a better use.

THE bayonets of Batoche have evidently settled the question so far as the Half-breed insurrection is concerned. But it never was likely that the conflict with this part of the rebellion would be protracted. The Half-breeds having, in spite of their hunting and roving habits, settled habitations were capable of being brought to bay, and, as their numbers were not great and their resources were very limited, they were sure to succumb when attacked by General Middleton with superior forces and a still greater superiority of arms. Nor was there anything in Riel's history to lead us to expect from him an indomitable resistance after defeat, though Gabriel Dumont appears to be a man of a different stamp. Riel will suffer: he has not only got up a rebellion among his own people, but has let loose upon us the Indian demon who massacres and tortures without regard to age or sex. Against the Half-breeds generally not much bitterness is felt. That they had their grievances, at least on the score of delay in settling their claims, the liberality with which the Commission is now dealing out scrip among them seems tacitly to admit; and the gallantry with which they fought against heavy odds for their homes and their little nationality touches the hearts of the victors. In a few months they will have repaired their battered huts and have resumed the deportment of quiet citizens. Now comes the question with the Indians. This no bayonet charge can settle. Yet the overthrow of Riel will have heavily discouraged his allies, and will tend to prevent the spreading of the insurrection; the troops are sufficient in number to guard all important points, and we may hope that want of supplies and ammunition will soon bring this part of the insurrection also to an end.

THE battle which is raging at Ottawa about the Franchise Bill obliges us to consider the morality of Obstruction. That much latitude ought not to be allowed to such a practice we are warned by the report of the fifty hours' sitting, during which the House of Commons was turned into a bear garden. Such scenes are the inevitable accompaniments of a physical resistance to the will of the majority, and they not only degrade the Assembly when they occur; they permanently demoralize. But is Obstruction ever lawful? Possibly it may be when a majority attempts for a Party purpose to break through the barriers of constitutional right and it becomes necessary to gain time for the purpose of awakening the country to the danger. Sir John Macdonald pleads with perfect truth that the submission of the minority to the majority is the principle of Parliamentary government. But the Opposition may reply, that it is also a principle of Parliamentary government that the power of determining the title of citizens to a vote, on which the whole Parliamentary system is based, shall be vested in impartial and trustworthy hands. Which is the real majority and which the real minority cannot otherwise be ascertained. If there were no limit to the right of the majority and the minority were bound always to obey, a majority for the time being might vote itself permanently into power. To put the matter in a more homely way, the game of party has its rules, and though the loser must abide the cast, neither party can be allowed to load the dice: if either party attempts it physical resistance will ensue. The Bill which gives the nomination of the whole body of revising barristers to the leader of the majority and makes the appointments permanent, in direct contravention of British precedent, so that we shall be placed entirely in the hands of the Tory Premier's nominees, may fairly be called an attempt to load the dice. If there is no sinister object in this proposal, why should not deference be shown to the very natural apprehensions of the country? The concession of a modified appeal shows that there was ground for apprehension. Why not make a further concession? It is impossible that the appropriation of this patronage by the Minister can be deemed a vital part of a measure for the regulation of the franchise. Perhaps in the Constitution of the future there will be some provision for enabling the minority, if it amounts to a certain proportion of the House, to suspend the ratification of a contested measure on specific grounds and for a stated time, pending the more complete manifestation of public opinion on the subject, instead of having recourse to the violent and barbarous method of obstruction. Perhaps some day a Constitution will be devised under which there will be no faction-fighting at all, but we shall be, as the Liturgy says, godly and quietly governed, and such of us as have no particular interest in politics will go about our daily work in peace.

THE friends and supporters of the Senate complain that it has been compelled to adjourn owing to the Obstruction in the Commons which prevents business from going up to it. But why has it no business of its own? Is not this a confession that the Senate is unable to initiate? One argument always brought forward in favour of a second chamber is that there is a large field of legislation on various subjects outside of Party questions in which the initiative may be taken by a Senate. So it may, if the Senate is what the theory assumes it to be, a representation of the great interests, of the leading professions, and of the intellect and science of the country. The French Senate, though nominated from the limited number of those who adhered or were not hostile to the dynasty, was composed in tolerable accordance with the theory, and accordingly it did initiate. Our Senate is unable to initiate, and is obliged when the supply of measures from the Commons fails to adjourn, simply because it has no authority of any kind. It has no authority as a political assembly, inasmuch as it has no constituents and represents nothing but the pleasure of the Minister. It has no authority on subjects other than political, because it has no members of distinction or weight as experts, but is little better than a retreat for superannuated politicians. The only thing in its power is occasionally to amend a Bill; and this it can do in important cases only when the word has been given it by the Prime Minister, who sometimes finds it rather easier to get a Senate amendment accepted by the Commons than to carry an amendment in the House of Commons itself. That