

# Dominion Churchman.

THURSDAY, OCTOBER 25, 1877.

## THE WEEK.

WE regret exceedingly to have to chronicle another great fire which has just occurred at St. John, N. B. We had scarcely recovered from the state of feeling occasioned by the previous conflagration, so extensive and so disastrous, when now we learn that *two thousand, three hundred persons have been rendered homeless* from a similar calamity. The fire began at about three o'clock on the morning of the 20th, on Main Street, Portland, which by four o'clock had made considerable headway. It is believed to have broken out in a wood shed off Acadia Street, and it moved with such rapidity that at a quarter past four, thousands of people were gathered upon Fort Howe, looking down upon an immense mass of flame. A number of three storey buildings and several barns, as well as the Methodist Meeting house, had by this time been destroyed. The excitement now became intense, many lives were endangered, and multitudes rushed through the streets in a frantic state. Sick women were carried from burning buildings and their cries were, in many instances, quite heartrending. The wind rose considerably after four o'clock, and blowing furiously from the north appeared sometimes to come from a slightly different direction. The excitement was very great when Mrs. Wood's house fell, at the corner of Main and Portland Streets, one man was struck on the head with a piece of the falling house, but no one at that time appears to have been seriously hurt. The efforts of the Portland firemen to stay the progress of the devouring element were fruitless. It was therefore decided to send for assistance from the city. The city firemen went to work earnestly, and by five o'clock the fire in an easterly direction was pretty well got under; and by nine o'clock the whole fire had nearly exhausted itself.

The burnt district extends from Acadia Street to Portland Street, along Chapel Street to Acadia Street and thence to Main Street. Both sides of Chapel Street are in ruins, and several houses on the east side of Acadia Street as well as those on the west are burnt.

The loss amounts to fully three hundred thousand dollars, and the insurance is about eighty thousand. Two hundred and thirty wooden houses were burnt. There was only one brick building in the whole district. As we have said, two thousand, three hundred people were burnt out; fully seven hundred of these were also sufferers by the great fire of the 20th of June, and three or four people are reported as having been burnt to death.

The determination of the Russians to continue the war is expressed on a variety of occasions. It is stated that the Czar told the general of the staff, a few days ago, that he and all the members of the Imperial family would remain with the army; "and if

necessary, all Russia will, as on a former occasion, take up arms." The victory in the neighbourhood of Kars will probably have the effect of infusing fresh energy into the Russian force south of the Danube. It is reported that only two hundred thousand Russians have crossed that river; the loss in killed and wounded having amounted to nearly sixty thousand. It is somewhat remarkable that the Russian Government should have so strangely miscalculated the Turkish powers of resistance. After the example of France and Prussia we should have looked for an overwhelming Muscovite force to have entered the Turkish territory and to have made a sharp and brief affair of it, instead of carrying on a dreary kind of warfare, sometimes amounting to little more than guerilla fights and skirmishes, which have only increased the sufferings of the Christian population and done immense injury to their cause. The cause is a European one, and should be undertaken by the great Powers in conjunction. Russia alone will never do any good in the matter, and at present the jealousies of the other great powers appear to indispose them for any united action that would wound the susceptibilities of the Turkish Government.

Perhaps the "tide in the affairs" of the Russian force in Asia has come, which, taken advantage of immediately, may lead on to the fortune they so ardently desire. At any rate a change has taken place in their military career, for at least they are able to claim a victory, and the Turkish force in the neighbourhood of Kars has met with a corresponding reverse. The great victory over Mukhtar Pasha was gained on the 15th instant. Many guns, prisoners and provisions were captured. The Caucasian grenadiers stormed Awlias Hill, forming the key to the new Turkish position. A two hours engagement ensued, resulting in the flight of Mukhtar Pasha in the direction of Kars or Erzeroum. It appears that the Russians attacked the Turks from four sides, and that they had 70,000 men in the neighbourhood. The Turks are said to have had only 40,000 men at the battle, and this number included fourteen battalions from Kars. The Ottoman field army lost one-third of its strength. On receiving information of Mukhtar's defeat, Ismail Pasha withdrew from the neighbourhood of Igdyr to the heights of Zov, near the frontier, and it is believed that he is on the point of completely evacuating that part of the country. In consequence of the disaster all the troops in Constantinople are being sent in haste to Trebizond, and Achmed Eyoub Pasha will go immediately to take command at Erzeroum. General Heymann is advancing on Erzeroum, Kars is surrounded, and negotiations for its surrender have been opened.

The investment of Plevna is going on, and may be expected to produce some important

results shortly. The Roumanians have attacked and captured the second Grivilza redoubt, which they again lost. The Russians have received reinforcements of ten thousand, and are so anxious to keep the condition of their army secret that they have reduced the number of correspondents they formerly allowed from sixty to two. It is rumored that their soldiers have to be on the bare earth, that the hospitals are choked with wounded and sick, who cross the Danube by a thousand cart loads at a time. From the most reliable accounts yet received it would appear that the Russians in the neighborhood of Plevna are in no condition suitable for a winter campaign. The cold rains and the want of winter clothing are making fearful havoc in the ranks of the armies in Bulgaria. During the space of less than three weeks there were five thousand deaths in the camp before Plevna, four thousand seven hundred in the army of the Czarevitch, three thousand in General Zimmerman's army in the Dobrudscha, and two thousand at Tirnova and Shipka. These make a total of about fifteen thousand deaths from disease among about a quarter of a million men, or one-fifteenth of the strength of the armies in Bulgaria. At the headquarters of the Czarevitch, Dolmir Monastir, the camps are literally lakes of mud, and all the roads have been declared impracticable except the highway between Biela and Rustchuk. The sufferings of the soldiers are said to be indescribable, no preparation having been made for winter, and those who lost their tents and overcoats in the retreat from the Lom mouth have not yet been supplied with others. But then we must bear in mind the fact that great deeds have sometimes been performed in lakes of mud and without overcoats and shoes. A great part of the battle of Waterloo was fought in a perfect swamp of mud; and the most splendid feats of valor performed by British soldiers in the Crimea were done while English vessels were steaming from London to Sebastopol, and back again, several times over, having on board the coats and shoes of the army all the time.

The Fire-King would seem to be in the ascendant just now. A destructive fire took place at Whitby, Ont., on the 16th, supposed to have been caused by the upsetting of a lamp in a grocery store shortly after six in the evening. The building was soon enveloped in flames, wooden buildings in the rear caught fire and burned fiercely, and soon the flames spread to stores in the vicinity—Watson's, Long & Stewart's, Allen's, R. & J. Campbell's, all brick buildings, which nevertheless succumbed to the flames. Other buildings were also consumed, and the loss is estimated at not less than a hundred thousand dollars.

An extensive inquiry is now being made in connection with the educational department

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