

The Church Times.

HALIFAX, SATURDAY, MARCH 16, 1856.

PARISH MEETINGS—THE CHAISEMAN.

The following reply to the question—whether the Clergyman is *ex officio*, of right and without election, entitled to take the Chair at Parish Meetings? may be perused with advantage before Easter Monday.

The only Provincial Act referring to these Meetings, is Cap. 50 of the Revised Statutes, which makes the Clergyman officiating as Rector in the Parish one of the Vestry without defining his position. It follows that the Ecclesiastical Law of England is the authority by which his position and duties must be determined, and according to this his right is clearly settled. We quote from Burns' Ecclesiastical Law—"The Minister hath a special duty incumbent on him in this matter, and must be responsible to the Bishop for his care herein; and therefore in every Parish Meeting he presides for the regulating and directing this affair; and this equally holds whether he be Rector or Vicar. The right of the Minister to preside at a Meeting of his Parishioners, seems to have been unquestioned law, since the learned decision of Sir J. Nicholl in *Wilson v. Mason*."—*Dr. Phillimore's Edit. Vol. I.*

In the special case of an Election of Lay Delegates, the Clergy, at the Meeting of the Diocesan Assembly last year, unanimously relinquished this right, in accordance with the suggestion in the Archbishop of Canterbury's Bill, in order that the Laity may be free to act in the matter, without any possibility of interference on the part of the Clergy; but this relinquishment of right for a particular purpose cannot affect the general claim and right, which every Clergyman is bound to maintain.

CONFIRMATION.

His Lordship the Bishop has been engaged during the week in holding Confirmations in several of the Churches of the City. On Sunday last the rite was administered in the Garrison Chapel, when 35 young persons renewed their baptismal engagements, and were earnestly addressed by the Bishop on the religious responsibility they had assumed, and the duties and obligations they owed to themselves and to society.

On Wednesday Confirmation was also administered in St. George's. Fifty-five candidates were presented to the Bishop. A communication from the Rector upon the subject will be found under the proper head.

Yesterday the Bishop held a Confirmation in the Cathedral Church of St. Paul's, and administered the Apostolic rite to 44 candidates. There was a full congregation, who appeared to take a deep interest in the solemn occasion. The Bishop delivered an impressive address to the candidates, which it is to be hoped will be treasured in their memory, and influence their future lives and conversation.

STEAMSHIP ARADIA.

The Steamship *Aradia* arrived on Tuesday evening last in 10½ days from Liverpool, bringing dates to March 1. Several important matters have been under discussion in the Imperial Parliament. The question of Peerages for life, has been disposed of in Committee of Privileges in the House of Lords, upon a motion of Lord Lyndhurst to the effect that the letters patent purporting to create Sir James Fitzroy a Baron of the United Kingdom for life, did not confer upon him a right to sit and vote in Parliament. For Lord Lyndhurst's motion there were 92, against it 57. The *London Guardian* commenting upon the subject, says—

"It is important to note the course which the question has taken. That Lord Wensleydale is a Baron, is not disputed. That his writ does not entitle him to a seat, has not been shown—nor, on the other hand, that it does; but the burden of proof seems to us pretty clearly to lie with those who maintain the negative. The real ground of the decision is expediency; the Lords contest a Royal prerogative because they deem it dangerous to their privileges. Have they the right to do that? At any rate they have the power. And the danger is real; the resistance ought to have been foreseen; and Ministers have only themselves to thank for an embarrassing difficulty in which it is far from certain that they have the weight of public opinion on their side."

The Sunday question has been set at rest for the present, by a large majority. The debate took place in the House of Commons on Thursday, Feb. 21, on Sir J. Walsley's motion for opening the British Museum and National Gallery on Sunday afternoons—

"Nearly an hour was taken up previous to the debate with the reception of petitions, chiefly against the motion. These exponents of the national mind reached the house in cabs and trucks, and other available means, causing a good deal of excitement as they rolled along Parliament-street. A list of them fills three closely printed columns of the *Times*, defying analysis. Mr. Gladstone presented one from the University of Oxford; the petitioners stated that the Religious observance of the Lord's Day had hitherto been a privilege and distinction of this country; they deprecated any measure which would tend to interrupt that observance, as they thought it would produce no beneficial results to counterbalance the vast amount of evil it would offset; and they, therefore, prayed for the rejection of Sir J. Walsley's motion. The debate was a good one, the interest being centred in the speeches of Lord Stanley and Mr. Roundell Palmer, the ablest advocates on either side."

Upon a division there appeared for the motion 48, against it 376—majority 328.

The Conference opened at Paris on Monday, Feb. 25. The first sitting was held at the place appointed for the Conference at the Foreign Ministry "France and England, so long hereditary enemies; Russia and Turkey, who are so still; Sardinia and Austria, of whom the same may be almost said, find themselves seated side by side or two to two in a saloon of which the principal decorations consist of portraits of Napoleon III. and his Emperor, and a colossal bust of Napoleon I., with the mission before them to bring about the peace of Europe, or, it may be said, indeed, of the world; for who can doubt that the future peace of the world is, indeed, dependent upon the result of their deliberations? Discordant elements these out of which to draw harmonious chords; and sufficient to make us still dread the futility of man's efforts unless favoured by the Power to whom to bring good from evil, light from darkness, is easy, and in whose hands in reality abide the issues of peace or war." At the first Conference an armistice was agreed upon to last until the 31st. of March—but it is not to extend to such naval operations as may be necessary for the blockade by the allied powers of the Russian ports, whether in the Baltic or Black Sea, or Sea of Azoff. The proceedings are conducted under the seal of secrecy, but this perhaps only gives greater effect to reports and insinuations by parties who may be supposed to mean of acquiring information of them. Some of these reports, however they may be grounded, which represent a conflicting state of opinion among the representatives of the various Powers, upon the fifth point, have had an alarming effect upon the money market. It had been rumored that the Conference had broken up, which caused a fall of more than 1 per cent. on the London Stock Exchange. The rumour, however, had received no corroboration at the latest advices.

Our relations with America gave rise to a motion by Mr. Hoebuck, on the House going into Committee of Supply, on Friday, Feb. 15, for the production of the Government instructions to Mr. Crampton, the English Minister at Washington. We have already given the substance of Lord Palmerston's answer. Nothing appears to have transpired since that discussion of a public nature—and all the papers are remarkably silent with reference to it.—Meanwhile Great Britain is quietly arming her possessions that lie contiguous to the United States, and it seems to depend altogether upon the latter, whether these warlike preparations shall come into hostile use, or be altogether put an end to by a more cordial feeling between the two governments. Public opinion in England upon the subject appears to be happily stated in the *London Guardian*, with a little quiet sarcasm upon the difficulty of commencing business in the American Congress,—thus—

"All that has happened, in Germany as well as in America, is the natural consequence of the unhappy endeavour to entice into our service subjects of neutral Powers. The measures pursued were paltry and unskilful, the scrapes they have led us into degrading, and the results achieved contemptible. It is of no use however, to interfere now. The mischief is done, and an apology has been offered which seems to have been substantially sufficient; and the spirit in which the American Government is acting throws us back on our own self-respect. If they want a quarrel they must have one. It is plain that they do not really want reparation. But, now that the House of Representatives, after prodigious efforts, has managed to elect a Speaker, may we not hope, that the friendly and temperate language which has been used at Westminister will find some echoes at Washington?"

The appointment of a coadjutor Bishop in Jamaica, has given rise to a good deal of comment, to which we shall again refer. The London Union on Church matters, at its annual meeting on the 26th February, among other topics of interest, alludes to the subject, and seems to infer an intention to establish an assisted in, instead of a subdivision of large dioceses into separate ones, as the future disposition of the government.

LEGISLATURE.

We see nothing in the Papers that is of much interest, with reference to Legislative proceedings.—The Parliamentary Reporter is so far behind with the debates, that practically it is a useless sheet. Mr. Chipman, Financial Secretary, has been returned by a large majority. The opposition to his election, we understand, proceeded from the liberals themselves.

A bill to amend the scale of Sheriff's fees, was read a third time in the House on Thursday last, and passed by a large majority.

In the Legislative Council on Tuesday last, Hon. Mr. Brown laid upon the table the joint Report of the Committee on Public Accounts. An abstract appears in the papers, from which we extract the following comparison of the Revenue of 1853, '54 and '55:

From this report it appears that the revenue of the Province for 1855, derived from Import and Excise duties, including the duties on Distillery Licences, amounted to £24,834 8s. 6d. sterling. The Revenue from the same sources for 1854 amounted to £104,142 16s. 1d., showing a difference in favor of 1854 of £29,601 6s. 7d. stg. The Revenue for 1853, from the same sources, amounted to £24,969 16s. 3d., showing a balance in favor of 1853 over 1854 of £10,664 12s. 3d. stg. It is stated that the decrease in the Revenue arose principally from the diminished importation of goods chargeable with 2½ and 6-14 per cent. ad valorem duties, the deficiency on those two items of the Tariff amounting to £9,647 12s. 6d., or a sum exceeding the whole decrease of the year by £13 6s. 10d. A further decrease of £2,170 1s. 2d. arose from the exceptions of the Reciprocity Treaty, but this is said to be more than balanced by the additional duties arising from Distilleries, Molasses, Tea and Leather.

Colonel Williams, R. E. with other officers, arrived here by the last steamer from Bermuda, being appointed it is said to examine and report upon the state of the fortifications in Nova Scotia. We understand that since his arrival a Board or Committee has met several times upon this important matter.

Another of those entertainments, got up by the Athenaeum Committee, to serve the purposes of their Institution, and to amuse and gratify our population, took place on Thursday evening. The gentlemen who addressed the audience, were Mr. Marriott, Principal of the Col. Church School, who delivered a philosophical and highly interesting address upon that important event in the History of Europe "The treaty of Tilsit" when Napoleon and the Czar, entered into a compact, which the lecturer very properly designated a conspiracy to oust England and divide between them the empire of the world. The address was an excellent one, evinced a competent knowledge of the subject, and was listened to with great attention. Mr. Marriott was followed by Dr. Morris, who undertook to read Byron's "Siege of Corinth," a poem which contains some of the finest passages of the noble bard.

The Mail Steamer from Newfoundland, brought intelligence of the decease of the Ven. Archdeacon Bridgwater, who departed this life after a short illness, on the 29th ult. The Newfoundland *Times* publishes a memoir of the deceased clergyman, who was much beloved, and is deeply lamented; to which we shall again refer. The Legislature in Session, resolved to attend his funeral, and the sympathy of all classes was manifested in the bereavement which the Church and his large family have sustained.

The Missionary at Bridgewater begs to be thankfully to acknowledge, through the medium of the *Church Times*, the receipt of £10, being the proceeds of a Charity Sermon (in aid of his new Church) preached on Sunday the 17th inst. in St. John's Church, Lunenburg, by the kind permission of the Rector of that Parish. He also begs leave to state that contracts have again been entered into, and that while his people have, by an almost convulsive effort, raised £100, in furtherance of said object, some two or three warm-hearted members of our Communion have become responsible for an additional hundred, for the payment of which they will have to be indebted to charitable contributions of others, and were some of the Churches in the Province willing to emulate the generous example of the one already set forth, the sum would doubtless soon be raised.

Fire at St. Margaret's Bay.—Mr. John Bargoyn, of French Village, St. Margaret's Bay, had his barn—containing about 4 tons of hay, several farming implements, and 10 sheep, totally consumed by fire on Tuesday last. We understand the loss to be about £160.