

Dominion Churchman.

THURSDAY, JULY 19, 1877.

THE WEEK.

IT is natural that the Burials Bill, and all that is involved by that measure and the amendments proposed to it, should occupy a very large share indeed of English Churchmen's thoughts and English Church-papers' columns. That the Bill should have been withdrawn by the Government after the late adverse vote in the House of Lords on Lord Harrowby's amendment, is only a result which all have foreseen as probable, for the present Government are adverse to adopting as their own any suggestions hostile or unacceptable to the Church; and that Lord Harrowby's ideas are not acceptable, the remonstrance signed by thirteen thousand clergymen sufficiently attests. Of course the charge of narrowness and uncharitableness is freely used against those who wish to keep the Churchyards exclusively for Church uses; but Churchmen now see—and they may thank Lord Harrowby and the Archbishop of Canterbury for teaching them—that it is no longer safe to trust to the Lords, or even to the Bishops, to resist the attacks of Nonconformist agitators; and every one knows that the assault on the Churchyards is merely an attack on an out-work and a prelude to a more general battle about the Established Church.

During the past week the progress of events at the seat, or rather two seats, of war has been somewhat slow. In Asia the reported retreat of the Russian armies is, to a great extent, confirmed, and the Turks have most unexpectedly, and for themselves most opportunely, turned the tables on their adversaries, who, however, were able to rescue the garrison that had been left in Bayazid. The campaign is, by some accounts, to be resumed by the Russians on a larger scale, but other rumours allege that troops will be withdrawn from Asia Minor to swell the ranks of the army on the Danube. In that district the advance to Tirnova was most important, but has not been followed up by any further successes. Both sides are preparing for some decisive battle which must soon be fought if the Turks are really guarding the Balkan passes. Hobart Pasha has, it is said, received from the Sultan *carte blanche* permission to undertake whatever naval operations in the Black Sea he may deem desirable. Greece is restless, but the telegraph assures us that the peace party have triumphed. Serbia is meditating an alliance with Roumania, a step that will probably be followed by the Austrian occupation of Bosnia. At present, it is impossible to say with any confidence that the war will be "localized."

We suppose it must be considered a matter of congratulation that the 12th of July passed off in Montreal with so little disturbance and bloodshed. Yet we hardly like to think that it has come to this that it is a re-

lief to know that only one man was cruelly killed by a crowd of bloodthirsty rowdies. Still we must be thankful that matters were no worse; and worse they undoubtedly would have been had not a favorable answer been made by the Orange society to the appeal to forego their intended procession which was made to them by the other societies of the city. The sectarian situation in Montreal may always be said to be critical, in that the embers of religious animosity are constantly hot and require a very slight breeze to fan them into a flame. Unfortunately the breeze very often springs up. Extremes on one side inevitably produce counter-extremes on the other. The Falk Laws are a most natural corollary of the Vatican decrees, and rampant Ultramontanism always engenders an equally rampant and pugnacious Protestantism. Sectarian riots should be put down with a firm hand, but no Government, Provincial or Federal, has the courage to incur an ephemeral loss of popularity even for the sake of the lasting peace which the repression of party and religious processions would confer on the community.

The Indian outbreak in Idaho is even more formidable than was at first supposed, and already great cruelties have been practised by the Indians and a good deal of blood has been shed, and will be shed, in retaliation. On the 12th inst. a detachment of the U. S. troops, came upon the redoubtable Chief Joseph's forces, and after some severe fighting compelled them to retreat with considerable loss. General Custer's sad fate has taught the American officers a lesson, and their strategy will be of a more cautious character in future. It is reported that no less than 1500 fighting men are with Sitting Bull on the Canadian side of the boundary line, where that personage is at liberty to retain his sedentary position as long as he behaves himself, submits to our laws, and does not make our territory a basis for hostile operations against the U. S. Government, which, says the *Guardian* in a late notice of Colonel Dodge's *Hunting Grounds of the Great West*, "has never made the slightest pretence of keeping faith with the Indians, while the British Government in Canada, which has kept strict faith with them, has contrived to avoid war and to live in perfect friendliness with its formidable neighbors." We must not, however, plume ourselves too much upon our treatment of the Indians and its success. We do try to act honestly towards them, but we have not had the same or such great difficulties that the U. S. Government has had to contend with, in such great numbers of warriors, such fierce tribes, so rapid an advance of white settlers, such desirable "reserves" to be plundered, &c. If each Minister of the Interior, however, will adhere to the rule of morality and honesty in his dealings with the Indians he can always count on having a large proportion of the aborigines themselves on the side of law and order.

As many of our readers are aware public attention has been much arrested by the extracts read in the House of Lords and printed in the press from a book entitled "The Priest in Absolution." Such extracts as we have seen—and we do not care to see any more—seem to justify the animadversions made upon the book, and it is most incomprehensible how a man of piety, manliness, and sense, such as the reputed author is said to have been, could have put such things into print. The use, however, which is being made of the objectionable character of this book to agitate the always too susceptible Protestantism of England is just on a par with the means used to obtain a copy of it—it having been stolen from a friend's (?) table by a visitor. The very mention of Confession is a red rag to the sectarian bull, who in his blind rage not only rushes madly at what the Church allows, but runs a tilt against those very reformers upon whom they who hold "opinions dating from the time of Queen Elizabeth" pin their faith. Habitual, and still more so compulsory, confession is not only not enjoined by the Church of England, but it is understood to be alien to her character, and is also said to be alien to the character of Englishmen; but occasional confession in certain cases she certainly does not only tolerate, but enjoin. If her priests are to receive such confessions when proffered to them, it is to be hoped that they have given some consideration to so difficult and delicate a task. *Ars est artium regimen animarum*, wrote St. Gregory; but many seem to think it is as easy to direct souls as to give souptickets. That a book for instruction in such cases should be written need neither alarm nor surprise us; we may reserve these sensations for the fact that its author writes on the assumption that habitual confession is the rule of English Church life, and that he has shown neither delicacy of thought nor manliness of feeling in discharging his self-imposed task.

The reports on the crops of Western Ontario are, on the whole, very encouraging, and lead us to indulge the hope that the harvest will be at least up to the average in fruitfulness. Good crops are so common that we almost come to look upon them as our right; but, perhaps, on this occasion, as most of us have realized to some extent how intensely disastrous to the best interests of the Dominion another bad harvest would be at this critical period, our Thanksgiving services—if God should please really to give us a fruitful season—may have more of heartiness and less of formality than has at some times and in some places been the case.

THE EIGHTH SUNDAY AFTER TRINITY.

THAT never failing Providence, which ordereth all things both in Heaven and earth, is again the subject of the Church's meditation. The living spirit which brooded