

THE WEEK.

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Current Topics.

Request to Correspondents.

As the subject of an Imperial Customs Union is attracting so much attention at present, and a meeting to discuss the subject will be held very shortly in London, we would esteem it a favour if our contributors would furnish us with their views of the following questions: What is your opinion as to proposals made by Messrs. Colmer and Ashton respectively? What is your solution of the problem set before the congress, namely, how to improve the trade relations between the different portions of the Empire, and how to secure for that Empire its fair share of the traffic of the world? A synopsis of both essays appeared as an editorial in our last number. It is quite evident that neither of the prize essays solves the difficulty. Local Canadian knowledge should be forthcoming to supply facts and considerations which would aid in settling a question which is vital to the prosperity of this country.

The Moscow Catastrophe.

The catastrophe at the Czar's coronation reminds one forcibly of the fatal accident at the coronation festivities of Louis XVI. The crowd then gathered to see the fireworks in the Palace Gardens got out of control, and nearly three hundred people were crushed to death. The situation of France at that date is not unlike that of Russia to-day. The nobles were all powerful. The common people were serfs. The characters of the young rulers are somewhat alike. The young Czar appears as really grieved as was the young King Louis XVI. The latter was as amiable a victim as could have been selected. Yet in him the sins of the fathers were visited upon the children. Upon Nicholas II. the same retribution will fall. He and the system he represents will perish like Louis XVI, and all that unhappy monarch typified. There is yet another historical coincidence. When Napoleon I. married the Archduchess Marie Louise a similar accident happened to mar the wedding festivities. The State Ball was broken up by the destruction by fire of the building in which it was going on. Napoleon himself escaped, but several lives were lost—among them distinguished people. In both cases the subsequent misfortunes of Louis XVI. and Napoleon justified the doleful auguries which were drawn from the mishaps. All we can say in the present case is *absit omen*.

The Vermont Democrats.

From the Springfield Weekly Republican of the 29th May last we extract a resolution passed at the Vermont Democratic Convention at Montpelier on the 27th May. "The Democrats of Vermont, in convention assembled, heartily commend and approve the able, patriotic and statesmanlike administration of Grover Cleveland. We are especially grateful for his brave and timely Venezuelan message, giving the historic democratic Monroe doctrine an assured standing in the civilized world and the vast beneficence to mankind in the formation of arbitration principles. We extend thanks to Secretary Carlisle for his conscientious and efficient management of the treasury department. We sympathize with the brave Cubans struggling for independence and extend to them kindly words of encouragement and hope for their success." This resolution is capable of being considered in two aspects. It may be an enunciation of the deliberate policy of the Democratic party, or it may be a piece of political clap-trap. In either case it is safe to predicate of it, that it would not be adopted unless it was considered to be popular. Many people, with whom the wish is father to the thought, consider the Venezuela dispute as quite settled. We very much fear it is not closed. The inhabitants of British Guiana have been appealing lately to the Imperial Government to make a move. The Colonial office has also just issued a set of regulations for mining districts and incidentally the boundaries are given of the lands intended to be affected by these regulations. These boundaries include all the territory claimed by England. This implied evidence of the intention of England to insist on her claim is gratefully approved of by the people of British Guiana. A spirited foreign policy may, probably will be, Mr. Cleveland's trump card. If so, where will he strike? Spain is weaker, but England is the most patient. A demonstration against the latter would be, as has already been demonstrated, popular enough. It is a matter of nice calculation which will land the Democrats once more in power. Canadians may be quite certain that that consideration is the only one which will decide the Democratic policy.

The Colours of the 72nd.

The sale by auction of the colours of a regiment seems a sacrilege which no words are sufficiently strong to stigmatise. The old 72nd and 78th are now respectively the first and second battalions of the Seaforth Highlanders. What a sight for gods and men! The flag which men have shed their blood to preserve unstained, the emblem of a nation's honour, which has been flung out in face of the nation's foes as a rallying point for Britain's soldiers—"Going, gentlemen; going, dirt cheap! One hundred and thirty-five dollars! Gone! Thank you, sir!" In all history there was probably never such a disgraceful episode. If colours are captured in action, it is the fortune of war. If destroyed to prevent capture the action is deemed meritorious. But to sell them by auction! Melville and Coghill, who saved the colours of the 24th at Isandula never thought that these same colours might go to the Jews. The old 74th at Fermoy, in 1818, burned their