

# THE WEEK.

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## The Week,

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Edited by CHARLES G. D. ROBERTS.

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## TOPICS OF THE WEEK.

THE Parliamentary proceedings of both the Ottawa and Toronto houses during the past week are comparatively barren of interest. In the Dominion Assembly, business was chiefly confined to the slow process of extracting information from the Government, out of which the Opposition intend to make political capital, and the performance of routine preliminaries. In the Ontario House, the interminable debate on the address drags its weary length without eliciting anything new to relieve the monotony. With an exemplary patience deserving better reward, the occupants of the front benches sit and listen to the endless lucubrations of members who, like Gratiano, speak "an infinite deal of nothing." The adjournment of the House on Friday afternoon enabled a number of members to return to their respective homes for a couple of days.

IN some remarks on the promotion of emigration to Ontario, the *Canadian Gazette*, published in England, points out that in the disseminating of information respecting the advantages presented by Canada to intending emigrants, those possessed by Ontario are not given sufficient prominence. Scarcely a week elapses without some fresh effort being made by the great corporations interested in the settlement of the North-West to make known the special resources of that territory. "Why," one contemporary pertinently asks, "is not something of the same kind being done on behalf of Ontario?" That Province is in especial need of good emigrants. She has suffered through numbers of her farmers going to the North-West in the hope of obtaining there a speedier return for their labour, and that exodus has not been compensated for by any proportionate influx from the Old World. To emigrants with capital, who do not care to encounter the rougher life of the far west, Ontario holds out special advantages. Hundreds of "improved" farms are constantly thrown in the market. British agriculturists could settle and obtain a comfortable living on these without excessive toil or hardship, and if this fact were made known in England, a most desirable class of settlers would probably be induced to come out.

BRADSTREET'S returns show thirty-seven failures in Canada during the past week, a decrease of one from the preceding week, a decrease of nine as compared with the corresponding week of 1883, and an increase of twenty-six as compared with the corresponding week of 1882. The same

authority also reports 365 failures last week in the United States against 276 for the corresponding period of 1883.

CANADIAN farmers will note with interest that the agricultural returns for 1883 show a further and significant decline in the area of land under wheat cultivation in Great Britain. Atmospheric conditions were not favourable to a good crop during the past year, but it is recognized that other influences contributed more largely to this result. Even phlegmatic and conservative Hodge is forced to the conclusion that the large imports of foreign-grown grain are mainly responsible for the fact that the surface now under wheat cultivation in England is less by 390,000 acres than it was a year ago, and 192,000 less than in 1881, when the aggregate was the smallest that had been up to the time recorded. All the probabilities point to a vastly increased production of wheat in North-West Canada and India, in view of which the cultivation of this cereal in Great Britain must inevitably be further curtailed.

THE one thing remaining to make the Montreal Carnival an unequivocal success is seasonable weather, and the only ground for trepidation on this head is that the prophet Vennor says Jack Frost will reign supreme during this long-looked-to festival. Certain it is that the picturesque "city of churches" has bestirred itself with a whole-souled intent to make the 1884 carnival worthy of the crowds of sight-seers which the various railway companies have made preparations to convey there.

THE death of Wendell Phillips has silenced perhaps the most eloquent voice on this Continent. It may be doubted whether any other man ever talked such nonsense in language so excellent and with a delivery so perfect. To hear him lecture was a great intellectual treat. Though he was the most intense of fanatics, there was nothing of the fanatic either in his diction or in his manner. The diction was pure, in perfect taste and free from extravagance; the manner was quiet and as like that of a well-bred gentleman as it is possible for that of a platform lecturer to be, while nobody out of Bedlam would have done the things which he recommended for the reasons for which he recommended them. It was insanity calm and self-possessed. His written utterances either were more violent or seemed so, because the language was not tempered by the delivery. It is impossible to doubt the sincerity of his philanthropy, since he devoted his life to the advocacy of the causes which he thought good. But there was in it a truculent, not to say a sanguinary vein. Against the Southerners he absolutely breathed fire and slaughter; it was fortunate for the country that his spirit did not preside over Reconstruction. The atrocities of Fenianism also were far too congenial to his temper. He loved his kind no doubt as truly as did Robespierre, and he would very likely have manifested his love with the same energy had destiny placed the same instrument in his hands. His political ideal, so far as its nature could be gathered from his spasmodic utterances, was a moderate anarchy with inconvertible paper currency.

OXFORD is deprived of a familiar figure by the death of Mr. Henry Parker, C.B., one of the most eminent of British antiquaries. Perhaps in practical knowledge of medieval architecture, ecclesiastical and general, he held the first place. He thus had fully merited his C. B. His later years were devoted to classical researches in Rome, where he carried on extensive excavations and made some discoveries of importance, especially with regard to the ancient walls, though his interpretation of the discoveries was vitiated by the fancy, which he had espoused, that the fables in the first book of Livy were genuine Roman history. His simplicity of character and complete devotion to antiquities lent piquancy to an incident which occurred in the course of his Roman explorations. It was in the days of Pio Nono, when political conspiracy was rife and the police was in a state of nervous vigilance. Mr. Parker formed a little society of antiquaries for the purpose of carrying on some special investigations. The name "society" was enough for the police, who taking it for granted that the object was political, placed the innocent antiquary under surveillance and opened his letters at the Post Office. He thus shared the fate of the literary traveller who was arrested in Russia for having Plato's "Republic" in his trunk.