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**Church Union.** The approaching union of the Free Church and the United Presbyterian Church of Scotland, is an event of much interest in the religious world. The multitude of sects into which Scottish Presbyterianism had divided itself is among the most curious results of Protestant ecclesiastical development. The Scot's capacity for religious thought and feeling, his strong individuality and tenacity of opinion gave to the centrifugal movement in ecclesiastical organization a strength which it has not developed elsewhere, but during the greater part of the century just closing, a centripetal force has been working in Presbyterianism both in the old world and in the new. As a result of this movement in Scotland there has been a union of the New Licht Burghers and the New Licht Anti-Burghers, as the United Secession Church; of the Auld Licht Burghers in part with the Established Church and in part with the Original Secession Church; of the United Secession Church with the Relief Church, under the title of the United Presbyterian Church; then of the Original Seceders with the Free Church and with most of the congregations of the Reformed Presbyterian Church. The Free Church and the United Presbyterian Church which have now agreed to unite, include in their membership, we are told, almost the entire body of dissenting Presbyterianism in Scotland, so that there will be one Established Presbyterian Church in Scotland and one dissenting body. This of course makes one too many. But so long as an influential body of Presbyterians in Scotland cling to the idea of a church establishment, or until disestablishment shall be effected by action of Parliament, the present division must continue. The union is however justly considered a great event in the religious history of Scotland. It marks a tendency to harmony in thought, feeling and effort among Christians, which is wholly desirable and encouraging. "The United Free Church of Scotland," says a writer in *The British Weekly*, "ought to be a mighty instrument for good. Who can put bounds to its influence and its usefulness? It contains within its pale the descendants of the men who bled and died for religious liberty, of the men who became martyrs for conscience sake, of the men who gave up all that they might secure freedom for their church, and the recognition of its Divine Founder as its sole head."

**A Dangerous Toy.** The accidents resulting from the use of giant firecrackers are sufficiently numerous and serious to justify an entire prohibition of their use upon the streets of a city and in all public places. If there were no other objection to them than the fright which the loud report accompanying their explosion causes to persons of weak nerves or weak hearts, that would be a sufficient reason for their banishment, as the shock to such persons, caused by an unexpected explosion of such violence, may have very serious consequences. But the fright caused by the giant firecracker is by no means the only objection. No great celebration takes place which in the judgment of the small boy calls for more forceful expression than his lungs are equal to, but that we have a list of accidents resulting from the use of the giant cracker, some of them causing injuries which will maim the victims for life. As an instance of this we observe that a number of accidents are reported as having occurred in Toronto from the cause named, on the occasion of the home-coming of the soldiers from South Africa. In one instance four persons were injured by the explosion, one man having his hand badly lacerated, and a woman having a deep gash cut in her cheek, probably causing disfigurement for life. In another instance a man picked up a giant fire cracker which exploded in his hand, the force of the explosion blowing off half the thumb and the tops of three fingers of his left hand, and also badly lacerating the right hand.

**The Presidential Election.** The election on Tuesday last in the United States resulted, in harmony with the general expectation, in reseating Mr. McKinley in the Presidential chair, and in a second decisive defeat for Mr. Bryan. The Democrat candidate had the solid South at his back, the States of Alabama, Arkansas, Florida, Georgia, Kentucky, Louisiana, Mississippi, Missouri, North and South Carolina, Tennessee, Virginia and Texas going for Bryan, and the silver States—Colorado, Montana, and Nevada—sixteen States in all. But the twenty-nine remaining States, including the four which have each more than twenty representatives in the electoral college—New York, Pennsylvania, Illinois and Ohio—supported the cause of McKinley. Several of the States which supported Bryan in 1896 have in this contest gone over to the Republicans. This is the case with Washington, Wyoming, South Dakota, Kansas, and even Bryan's own State Nebraska. The general result is a sweeping victory for the Republican party and policy. It means the national approval of a gold standard, and the national condemnation of a fictitious silver standard. It means the national approval of the expansionist policy of the McKinley administration as it has found expression in Hawaii, the West Indies and the Philippines, but it is highly probable that Bryan's Anti-Imperialism would have received much stronger support if it had not been complicated with his unpopular doctrines in reference to the currency. Of course the triumph of McKinleyism is a triumph for the policy of high protection, and though that is not a fact to give pleasure to this country, yet the election of Mr. McKinley is received with general satisfaction in Canada as well as in Great Britain, since it means the triumph of an administration which has shown a friendly disposition toward Great Britain, and the defeat of a leader who has been quite ready to appeal to the Anti-British feeling in his country. The election at this time of Mr. Bryan would not only have caused serious apprehension within the United States in view of the change which would have been involved in applying the Bryanite doctrines to the internal and external affairs of the nation, but it would also have caused apprehension abroad, and especially in Great Britain and her colonies, as to the results as affecting the foreign policy of the United States. The English speaking world will therefore unite quite generally with the great majority of the people of the United States in the re-election of Mr. McKinley.

**The Dominion Elections.** As a result of the Dominion General Election on Wednesday last, the Liberal party in Canada secures another lease of power. At this writing it is not yet possible to give quite definite statements as to what the relative numerical strength of the parties will be in the new House. In a few constituencies the vote was so close that a recount may change the result as at first announced, and there are four constituencies—Gaspé, Que.; Nipissing, Ont.; Burrard, B. C.; and Yale-Cariboo, B. C.;—in which the elections are yet to be held. These will not however materially affect the results. The figures as nearly as can now be ascertained for the different Provinces and for the country as a whole are as follows:

Province.	Libs.	Cons.	Ind.
Ontario	33	54	3
Quebec	56	7	1
Nova Scotia	15	5	0
New Brunswick	9	5	0
P. E. Island	2	3	0
Manitoba	2	3	2
British Columbia	2	2	0
N. W. Territories	4	0	0
Totals	123	79	6

By comparing this statement with the relative strength of the parties in the House previous to the elections, it will be seen that the Government has suffered serious losses in Ontario, where a majority of six has been turned into a minority of twenty-one. But in the Maritime Provinces and Quebec the Government has secured compensating gains. In Nova Scotia it has lost one seat—Colchester—and has

gained six—Annapolis, Cape Breton (two seats,) one seat in Pictou, Richmond, and Victoria. In New Brunswick it has lost two seats—Kings and Sunbury-Queens, and has gained six—Gloucester, Kent, Restigouche, Victoria, Westmorland and York. In P. E. Island, where the Government was in a minority of one, the figures indicate no change. The three Provinces now give the Government a majority of thirteen. In Quebec the Government has made a gain of seven seats. In Manitoba, the Northwest Territories and British Columbia, there will apparently be little change in the comparative strength of the parties as represented in the new House. One of the remarkable incidents in connection with the election is the defeat of so many of the leading men of the Opposition. The list of the defeated includes Sir Charles Tupper and Mr. Foster, in the Maritime Provinces; Messrs. Bergeron and Taillon in Quebec, Dr. Montague in Ontario, and Mr. Hugh John Macdonald in Manitoba. Constituencies will doubtless be opened for a number of these gentlemen—perhaps all of them, if they desire to become members of the House, and that they should do so is certainly to be desired in the interests of the country. It would be a great mistake to suppose that a strong man has but little influence in Parliament because he and his party are in opposition to the Government of the day. Sir Charles Tupper has, however, definitely intimated his intention to withdraw from the political arena. Entering public life in 1855, Sir Charles has been for forty-five years one of the most influential factors in the politics of the country. He has been a strong fighter, making fast friendships and arousing fierce antagonism. His great ability and force of character no one can question. As to the value of his services to his country there will of course be varying estimates, but all will admit that it has been very considerable, and there are few who will not wish the aged statesman many peaceful years of life at the close of his long and strenuous career.

**Lord Salisbury's Banquet on Friday night Lord Guild-Hall Speech.** Salisbury followed a time-honored precedent in discussing matters of national and international concern. The speech was not without some cheerful strains. This is noted especially in his Lordship's gratulations respecting the result of the Presidential election in the United States and the good understanding existing between the British and American Governments. But most of the speech appears to have been rather in the minor key, and parts of it are said to have inspired feelings in strange contrast with the gorgeous appointments of the feast. Although he praised the valor of British soldiers he spoke of war and its results in terms indicating his apprehension as to the possible results of promoting the spirit of war in the nation, and declared that the passionate admiration of military valor evinced by the populace must produce a change of attitude in the outside world. "Then, with lowered voice and almost trembling accent, he went on to speak of the price of victory and the ravages of death, dealing especially with the Queen's bereavement in the loss of Prince Christian Victor. Finally, with bent head and hands clasped, he uttered a hope, almost a prayer, that Lord Roberts might be spared the sorrow now hanging over him by reason of the critical condition of his daughter. Tears came into the eyes of the women and men moved uncomfortably in their seats. The silence and solemnity grew oppressive." Lord Salisbury maintained, however, that Mr. Kruger in South Africa and the Empress Dowager of China had forced Britain into hostilities in those countries, and he held that the British War Office deserved great credit on the way in which it had handled those emergencies. Respecting the Anglo-German compact in reference to China, his Lordship said that it represented the feeling of most if not all the powers concerned, and that it was impossible to lay too much emphasis upon the integrity of China and the 'Open door.' It was a matter of great advantage that the powers should have expressed themselves in favor of these fundamental principles. Toward the close of his speech the Prime Minister dwelt upon the necessity of maintaining the defences of England in a perfect condition in terms which seemed to his hearers to point to his apprehension that the peace now existing among European nations was not unlikely to be disturbed and in particular to the possibility of antagonism on the part of France.