

is, rather than it is what it is. It concedes the principle of reform by recognizing its propriety and necessity. It enters the wedge. Many independent and cautious peers of the type of the Duke of Argyll and Lord Selborne, as well as more radical reformers of the Lord Rosebery temperament, will be assiduous in driving it further, though perhaps not quite ready to drive it home.

Our English exchanges bring us further details of the points at issue in regard to that section of the Local Government Bill, on which the Government was defeated two or three weeks since. Mr. Morley's motion which was carried against the Government dealt with but a single feature of the scheme proposed in the Bill for the management of the County Police. The whole question will, no doubt, come up later and become a battleground on which the Opposition hope to win further triumphs. It must be admitted that on its face the Government's scheme appears somewhat awkward. The question of what authority shall control the Police under the new order of things is one of great importance. As they have hitherto been appointed and managed efficiently by the Court of Quarter Sessions, the Government, it may readily be supposed, would gladly have left the sole control in the same hands. But that would have been too inconsistent with the generally democratic features of the Bill. A compromise was therefore attempted. The Bill, as framed by the Government, transferred the control of the police to a Joint Committee to be formed in equal parts of county magistrates appointed by the Quarter Sessions, and of representatives of the County Council, but reserved the appointment and dismissal of the Chief Constable to the magistrates. Mr. Morley's amendment dealt with the latter point only, and took the plausible form that the power of appointing the Chief Constable should rest where the other powers of control over the Police were vested, viz., with the Joint Committee. Though this motion carried, it by no means follows that the question is settled. There is little doubt that the Radicals will follow up their advantage at a later stage with a motion to do away with the Joint Committee and entrust the control of the Police directly to the County Council. There is, of course, much to be said in favour of this arrangement as the simple and logical outcome of the local self-government which is the basal principle of the bill, but the Government and its Conservative supporters will scarcely consent to so complete a transfer of authority. It is very likely that the contest over the clause will be one of the hottest of the session.

THE long-talked-of case of O'Donnell against the *Times* has been concluded without throwing any very satisfactory light upon the prime question of the guilt or innocence of Mr. Parnell and the National League in the matters charged. It can hardly be expected that Mr. Parnell's unsupported denial of the genuineness of certain letters will satisfy anybody, except those of his own friends and partisans who have fullest faith in his integrity. Those friends and partisans will no doubt continue to believe in his innocence, accept his denials, and applaud his dogged determination not to "fall into the trap" set for him by the *Times*; in other words, to let the history and methods of the League he dragged into the light of full publicity by taking action against the *Times* for libel. It is possible that the Government may take the view that the honour of the House demands an investigation by a Parliamentary Committee, though (as such a committee would be of necessity partisan in its composition) no deliverance it might make would have the weight that would attach to the verdict of a court of justice. Under the circumstances Mr. Parnell's forbearance in declining to bring an action against the paper which deliberately charges him with the foulest of crimes is remarkable, and, to say the least, suspicious. On the other hand, it cannot be denied that there is some force in Mr. Davitt's declaration that if the Attorney-General can prove, as he alleges, the charges contained in the *Times*' article on "Parnellism and Crime," if he can convict Parnell, Davitt, and others of conspiracy to murder, it is his duty to take the initiative by placing them in the dock. So serious a matter cannot surely be left in its present indeterminate state.

WHATEVER charges of inconsistency and failure in the matter of Civil Service administration may be urged against President Cleveland, the fact seems undeniable that, on the whole, great progress has been made in the direction of Civil Service reform during his term of office. Under his authority, and with his approval, the Civil Service Commission has enlarged and extended the rules governing appointments, until the number of offices, which can be used for purposes of patronage, has been very materially reduced. The *New York Times* points out that the changes made are substantial, and even radical, in two directions. Offices which were pre-

viously exempt from the operation of the rules have been brought within their scope, and a large number of detached places, to which these rules have not hitherto been applied, are now included within them. The *Times* sums up the results as follows: "There is not an employee of the Federal Government in the Department, or an employee of the District Government, except those who have the pay and do the work of unskilled labourers, that is not appointed on competitive examination and probation, unless the office be distinctly specified as excepted. The number of the latter is, moreover, very much reduced." It cannot be denied that the work of Civil Service reform has made very hopeful progress in the United States within the last four years. The adoption of it, as one of the planks of both political platforms, shows well how the public mind is supposed to be affected towards it.

THERE has been of late years a very general awakening in the United States to the fact that the old policy in relation to the public lands has been too lax and wasteful, and that stricter methods must be adopted for guarding what is left of the public domain. In his last annual report the Secretary of the Interior emphasized the conclusions that had been reached by his predecessor in office in reference to this matter, and pointed out the necessity for the repeal of existing laws and the passage of more stringent ones, in order to enable the administration to cope with the evasions, perversions, and abuses which have long been rife. These recommendations of the Secretary have now been in part embodied in a bill which has been passed by the House of Representatives. This measure classifies all the public lands as agricultural, timber, mineral, desert, and reserved. Mineral and stone lands are left to be disposed of under existing laws, but the old pre-emption and timber-culture laws are repealed. The sections relating to timber lands forbid the sale of such lands, but allow the timber to be disposed of under proposals, and permit settlers to take timber not commercially valuable for domestic use. The President is authorized to set apart tracts of forest land as public reservations. The desert lands may be entered upon, in tracts not larger than 320 acres, by any one, upon affidavit that it is for himself, not for a corporation, and that he intends to cultivate it by irrigation, upon a payment of from \$5 to \$20, according to size of entry. The provisions relating to agricultural lands allow heads of families, making affidavit that the land is for their own use, to enter quarter-section tracts where they do not own that amount of land in any state or territory, upon a payment of \$5 or \$10 according to the size of the entry. Entrymen are required to establish residence upon their claim within six months after entry in habitable houses, to reside thereon continuously for five years, and cultivate at least ten acres, when they may take out patents. An important amendment provides for retaining in the Government the title to coal mines found in land so disposed of. These strict provisions for husbanding what is left of the national heritage are the outcome of extended and costly experience, and, as such, cannot fail to be of interest to those who are entrusted with the management of the forests and farm lands, which still remain unappropriated in the various provinces of the Dominion.

BOULANGISM does not, to outward seeming, progress very fast in France. It would, however, be rash to assume that it has expended its force, or that the ridicule with which it is assailed in Paris makes much less serious the danger with which it threatens the Republic. The doughty general himself seems full of hope. "The movement," he says, "becomes every day stronger and more marked." "Have confidence: you are sure of success!" As no one excepting himself, and perhaps even that exception need not be made, seems to understand very clearly what the movement is, or in what direction it is setting, it is not wonderful that the evidences of progress are less visible to other eyes than his own. Much depends, no doubt, upon the action of the Government. As the blunders of the former Ministry gave him the chance to vault into his present position, so a mistake on the part of the present not very strong or popular one may at any moment give him another advantage, which he would not be slow to use. Sig. Castelar probably hardly exaggerates the danger of the situation when he speaks of Boulangism as a "madcap policy," which "may lead to an explosion of bombshells and dynamite on every side and to a general war in Europe." Should any turn of events lead the fickle populace to place Boulanger for the moment at the head of affairs, it is doubtful if any thing could avert either the internal convulsion or the European conflagration which would almost surely follow.

THERE were in Great Britain, in 1886, 511 deaths from poison, including cases of chronic poisoning by lead. Of these, 327 were accidental, 178 suicidal, and only 6 homicidal.