

IMPERIAL PARLIAMENT.

DUKE OF EDINBURGH'S ANNUITY.

Defeated by Combined Liberal and Conservative Members—Mr. Morley's Evicted Tenants' Bill—Press Opinions.

LONDON, April 20.—Alpheus Cleophas Morton, Liberal, moved in the House of Commons this evening that the annuity of £10,000 drawn by the Duke of Saxe-Coburg and Gotha, in his capacity of Duke of Edinburgh, be forthwith abolished. Henry Labouchere, the Radical leader, seconded the motion. The Duke, he said, did not need the money, as his income from other sources was ample. From Coburg, which was a rich principality, he drew £30,000 yearly. By his marriage he had obtained £15,000 yearly. The duke, moreover, was a foreign sovereign. As such he might at any time find his obligations opposed to the interests of Great Britain. There was no reason why England should help to support the Duke of Saxe-Coburg and Gotha.

Lord Randolph Churchill attacked Mr. Morton's motion warmly.

Sir William Harcourt defended the grant. It was perfectly regular and proper. A more inauspicious moment than the present one could not have been selected for proposing the ungracious motion under consideration. The abolition of the grant would not commend itself to the sentiments of the nation.

Mr. Balfour said that he deplored deeply the objectionable debate which had been initiated at the most inopportune moment. He agreed fully with the declaration of the Chancellor of the Exchequer.

Mr. Morton's motion was defeated by a vote of 298 to 67.

LONDON, April 20.—The Evicted Tenants' bill, which Mr. Morley introduced in the House of Commons yesterday, fell like a wet blanket upon the Government supporters. What little enthusiasm was manifested by them was plainly perfunctory and it is doubtful whether the measure will be pushed to a final vote. The apathetic attitude which many of the Irish members have assumed toward the bill, and the open hostility displayed toward it by the remainder of the Irish party, cannot fail to have a disheartening effect upon the moderate Liberals. The Radicals may possibly support the bill, but it is ascertained that the Unionists will not, as it is known that the Conservatives will fight it tooth and nail.

The Standard says:—"The bill reflects credit on Mr. Morley's sentiments of justice and moderation, but will hardly need Mr. Harrington's prophecy of a revival of the reign of terror to realize that the Government's plan of pacification may end in the return of chaos."

LIVELY TIMES EXPECTED IN THE HOUSE

LONDON, April 21.—The Government has so overweighted their parliamentary programme for the session with contentious matter that not a single one of their measures has a chance of passing, unless the bills shall be so materially altered as to almost wholly transform them. The Registration Bill, the Evicted Tenants Bill and the Budget proposals each contain a sufficient number of objectionable provisions to excite the determined and prolonged opposition, not only of the Conservatives, but a considerable part of the Irish membership and many Radicals and Unionists. The Conservatives will resort to every possible form of obstruction in resisting the raid made upon landed property under the proposed new estate duty, and in these tactics they can confidently count on the undivided support of the Unionists. The liquor interests are exerting a powerful influence on the Irish and Scotch supporters of the Government in their insistence upon the modification of the projected duties on spirits and beer. Their efforts in this direction have not been in vain either, for the clamor they have raised has already compelled Sir William Harcourt to limit the imposition of the proposed tax on spirits to one year, and it is not unlikely that he will find it desirable to make still further concessions to the increasing demands of different sections of the kingdom. Even under the limitation of the proposed tax on spirits to one year, Ireland, which is already paying a conspicuously unfair proportion of the domestic revenues into the Imperial treasury, will be mustered to the tune of £200,000 additional taxation, and with

the proposed increase under the estate duty, it is estimated that the excess of Irish taxation over the current year will be over £500,000. Confronted by this condition of things it is not surprising that the Irish Parliamentary party are fretting over the delay of the Government in bringing forward home rule, a delay that is tantamount to the shelving of that measure for the session. Neither is it any wonder that the Irish party are chafing at the obstructions placed in the way of a settlement of the question of the financial relations between Great Britain and Ireland. The formation of a royal committee to consider the financial question has dragged at every stage and if its deliberation and the subsequent steps toward a settlement of the matter shall be attended with as much apathy and as great delay the final act of the performance will be postponed until far into the future. It is true that Her Majesty has got to the stage of appointing the members of the commission, but it will be a long time before the commission will be able to do anything practical in the matter, perhaps not this year. The commission is composed of Sir Hugh Childers, as chairman; Right Hon. George Goschen, Mr. Thomas Sexton, Hon. Edward Blake, Mr. John J. Clancy, Lord Playfair, Lord Farrer of Abinger and Lord Welby (formerly Sir Richard Welby).

A BITTER FIGHT EXPECTED.

The most bitter fight of the session will undoubtedly be made on the Registration bill. The Opposition have already given intimation of their intention to contest to the last gasp the clauses providing for the abolition of plural voting, the holding of simultaneous elections and the three months' residence qualifications. These clauses comprise about all there is of the bill and the Conservatives will not be alone in fighting the measure. The restriction of plural voting by holding simultaneous elections is quite as offensive to some of the Liberals as to the Tories and Unionists, and from these Liberal objectors the Conservatives may receive some assistance through their compelling the modification of that objectionable clause. Of course nobody expects the bill to become a law even if it should pass the House of Commons, which is by no means certain. Lord Salisbury, in his speech to the Primrose league, announced the fate of the bill in the event of its reaching the House of Lords when he said that the Lords would reject the measure unless the plural voting and three months' residence clauses were withdrawn. With these clauses withdrawn there would not be anything left of the bill but the enacting clause, which might as well be stricken out with the others. The chief difficulty with the Evicted Tenants' bill is the proposal to allow land grabbers the option of retaining their farms. The McCarthyites are carrying their allegiance to the Government to extremes in assenting to this proposal, as they must certainly be aware that the popular sentiment in Ireland will not be satisfied unless the land-grabbers are cleared out. Mr. Sexton, in justification of himself and his associates in this matter, minimizes the importance of the question. He intimates that there are not above a hundred land-grabbers in all Ireland, the most of whom, he says, are ready to vacate their farms at any time if they receive adequate compensation for doing so. The Parnellites take a view of the matter more in coincidence with Irish popular opinion. They demand that the evicted tenants shall have absolute power to re-occupy their holdings, that is to say, that nobody shall occupy a farm until the tenant evicted therefrom has decided whether he desires to re-occupy it, under certain prescribed conditions, or not. If the tenant decided to re-occupy it under those conditions, the landlord shall have no power to prevent him. When the question comes to a vote it will be possible in the event of the absence of a number of the McCarthyites for a coalition of Unionist and Parnellites to defeat the Government thereon.

Customer (in book store)—I would like to get some good book on Faith. Clerk—Sorry, sir, but our rule is to sell nothing to strangers except for cash.

"And now," said the new secretary, "yez may all rise, an' whin I call the roll iverywan who is prisint may sit down; all the rest remain standin'."

GOVERNMENTS IN IRELAND.

An English Democrat Handles the Question in a Clear and Masterly Manner.

Under the title of "Governments in Ireland," Mr. William Field, M.P., has just issued a volume dealing with the political and social condition of Ireland from the earliest Pagan times of which we have anything like authentic record, down to the invasion of the Normans, or, as the author prefers to call it, "the English visitation." A writer of such pronounced democratic opinions as those held by Mr. Field could hardly be expected to take a very favorable view of a system of government in Ireland under which the masses were excluded from political power, but surely his assertion is altogether too sweeping that "although the principles of all that constitute a nation or a government were nearly approached, yet there was no government nor no nation; there was, properly speaking, no people, because the *vox populi* was silent. There was no actual government in the sense of public utility that is at present attached to these words." Our answer to this is that there was a nation, divided into tribes, it is true, but these tribes were all, nominally at least, through their elected chiefs, subject to the king of the province in which they were located, and that the provincial kings, in their turn, were subject to the King of Erin. There was a system which, however imperfect, however liable to go down before a compact foreign foe, was the outcome of national opinion, and embraced every tribe and clan in the community. On the whole, this system did not work badly, and it was in a fair way of developing that strong central authority, to the lack of which Mr. Field attributes nearly all the miseries of Ireland since it was assailed by methods and by weapons undreamed of when that political system was founded. For when King Diarmid was driven from Tara by the boycott directed against him by St. Ruadan and other clerics, he was engaged in endeavoring to obtain in an unmistakable fashion the full recognition of his authority as Ardriagh, and it was because of this endeavor that the sentence was leveled against him and the ancient stronghold of ancient sovereignty.

The evil consequences of the successful action of St. Ruadan, Mr. Field no doubt appreciates, for he points out that the overthrow of Tara not only destroyed a neutral place of meeting for the provincial kings, to which they could come, without any sense of inferiority, but that inevitably the authority and influence of the Ardriagh diminished, if it did not disappear, with the destruction of the cherished seat. "The halo of custom, the charm of ancient glory, could not be transferred," and wherever after the monarch kept his court, it never imposed upon the imagination or the loyalty of his sub-kings, as Tara was wont to do with its memorials of long transmitted power and sovereignty. The surrender of Diarmid and the fall of Tara proved that there was a greater power, and this was fatal to the prestige and to the authority of his successor. The clerics who struck this fatal blow against the central authority had themselves little idea of the need of a strong central government. The bishops were originally attached to the tribes, and often put the tribal above the national interest.

Many of them from time to time took up arms, and this led to a weakening of respect for all authority, including their own, so that when the Danes came there was neither a strong national government nor a powerful religious organization around which the tribes could rally for the defense of the island, and so the destruction of the monasteries and the religious houses was in a large measure due to the ruin of Tara, and the consequent lessening of the power and the influence of the Ardriagh. It had also unfortunately the effect of interrupting the regular holding of the parliament of Tara, which, as Mr. Field points out, was probably the earliest assembly of representatives of independent kingdoms for judicial and legislative purposes, and to which also came the chiefs of the tribes of the nation, so that such an assembly must have tended to the conservation of a central authority and the recognition of a common interest. Although Mr. Field asserts that the people were denied political power it must be remembered that the chief was elected

by the tribe, and, therefore, he could be looked upon as its representative, in a limited sense, perhaps, in the fairs or parliament. Under such a form of government as existed in Celtic Ireland, and considering the military spirit, it is not surprising that the humbler industries should have been left to the serfs, and that because slaves were engaged in them those industries were despised. But it is going rather far to say, as Mr. Field does, that "industry was looked upon as slavery." The higher artificers certainly the rath or dun builder, the armorers, the workers in gold were much honored; and it would seem that according to the degree of skill required in the various arts that the craftsmen took rank among themselves.

The battle champion was, no doubt held in greater esteem, especially by the women and the bards, than the artificer, but even in those days there were found rich farmers, with fat pastures and fine herds, who looked down upon the gay gallants who could lay claim to no more land than that under their footstools, and not always to that. Still, it is not to be denied, as Mr. Field contends, that the incentives to war were many, and those to peaceful employments few. No matter what was the theme of the bard in the banquet halls of the kings or of the wandering minstrel under the roofs of the people the clash of swords was ever heard in the rhyme. Under these circumstances the condition of the people, liable to be summoned at any moment to the battlefield or foray, as well as that of the unfortunate serfs liable to be transferred from one master to another as the spoil of war, was not an enviable one. Slavery was a blot on Celtic, as it had been on Greek and Roman, civilization. And in this matter our ancestors were no worse than their more polished neighbors, and although slavery, however disguised, is still "a bitter draught," it should be remembered when considering the condition of the bondsmen and women of ancient Erin, that slavery in a hospitable and purely pastoral country, in which there were no walled towns with dingy, narrow streets, and when there was no necessarily unhealthy employments must have been a lighter lot than in many other lands in more ancient times. But the absence of those towns, unfortunately, involved the absence of those municipal institutions which in most European countries were the cradles of civic liberties. The Irish monarch, therefore, struggling to lay the foundations of a strong central government had to fight almost single-handed against ancient customs. Nevertheless, what Diarmid had attempted to do, Brian almost succeeded, if he did not quite succeed, in accomplishing. For a brief moment Ireland, under "Imperator-Scotorum," as Brian proudly styled himself, was a united nation with a masterful king, strong and brave enough, if he had been spared, to hold by the sword and to further consolidate by his skill as a statesman the kingdom which he had won from a host of foes.

On the whole, when everything has been said for and against Celtic Ireland, it will be found that when its institutions reached their highest development Ireland was, at least, on a level with any contemporary European nation. Mr. Field has approached the study of the question from the standpoint of a labor advocate and a democrat. He has to complain of the labor degradation of the masses and of the honor given to the warrior over the laborer, but he notes that under the Breton laws provision was made for the old and the poor, for which advanced English politicians are clamoring, and he dwelt with satisfaction on a land system under which evictions were unknown. He notes also the want of machinery to carry out the laws, and he asserts that in the Christian, as well as in the Pagan, period the political rule was sectarian owing to the fact that all through both periods, save during the revolution of the Altacotti, all the military power was in the hands of a limited class, which also controlled the education of the country. In support of his views Mr. Field cites a long list of authorities. The volume, which is well printed in large type on good paper, will be followed shortly by another dealing with Ireland since the coming of the Normans. To the present volume is prefixed a colored map of Ireland toward the end of the twelfth century, showing the principal territorial divisions that then existed.—*Dublin Independent.*

Culture never makes a saint.