

best friends of President Cleveland, while admiring the manly and moral tone of the comprehensive summary of his political faith with which he commences his article, and especially his declaration of the need of "a strict and steadfast adherence to the principles of Civil Service reform," can hardly refrain from regretting that the latter years of his administration have so poorly fulfilled the promise of the earlier in respect to that reform. Two subjects occupying a large share of public attention are conspicuous, to use a Hibernicism, by their absence from the letter, Temperance and Retaliation. The fact no attempt is made to manufacture capital out of the latter cry, whether due to its failure to evoke the sympathy of the better class of citizens, or to some more disinterested and creditable motive, is significant and reassuring to those on both sides of the line who would deprecate a relapse towards commercial barbarism.

In the last number of *The Universal Review* Canon McColl presents a new plea for Home Rule, not only in Ireland but in Scotland and Wales and the provinces generally. There can be no doubt that the state of things he describes constitutes a real evil, and is liable to become at any time a source of terrible danger, though there may be much doubt as to the efficacy of the remedy he proposes. The ground taken is, that the centralization of government in London, by attracting all the rank, wealth, and intelligence of the nation to the Metropolis, and in their train an ever-increasing number of dependents, constitutes a grave national danger. The support of the millions who are now huddled together on the banks of the Thames, and whose numbers are being increased at the rate of 80,000 annually, depends, as Canon McColl points out, mainly on foreign producers. Should command of the sea be lost for a single week, London would be on starvation rations. If, in addition, the main lines of railway were blockaded, the surrender of the metropolis would be a matter of only a week or two. "We should have," says he, "an enemy within our gates not less dangerous than the enemy outside—a pauper and criminal population, demoralized and maddened by famine." The presence of a vast mass of people in the great city, in a state of chronic semi-starvation, is, Canon McColl avers, a standing menace, apart from any consideration of war or invasion. And the effects upon the social life of the country are, he thinks, equally to be deprecated. The process of rural depletion is constantly going on. Merry England is ceasing to be merry. Gloom and sullen discontent are settling down upon it. Both the downfall of ancient Rome and the horrors of the French Revolution were caused to a large extent by the flocking of the gentry to the metropolis to spend their property in riotous living. The same process is going on in England. "Absenteeism has been increasing at a perilous rate, with the inevitable result of mortgaged estates; rents raised to meet expenditure; the old mansions occupied by strangers, who have no interest in the country or sympathy with its people; communal rights invaded; the custom which supported the village shopkeepers and tradesmen removed to London; while a feeling of dangerous alienation is spreading and deepening between the classes and the masses." This is a sombre, and let us hope an exaggerated and pessimistic picture. But the tendency of population to gather in great centres is unquestionably one of the gravest sociological problems of the day. It is to be feared that some remedy more effectual than multiplying centres of government must be devised before it can be satisfactorily solved.

A LATE number of *The Spectator* has a well-reasoned article on a question which has been greatly exercising the English mind since the close of the naval manoeuvres—the question, namely—whether, in the event of actual, "horrid" war, the belligerent nations may be relied on to stick to the rules laid down by conferences and professors of international law. Premising that what is called international law would be much better named international usage, "since law postulates the notion of an enforcing power, and the so-called public law of nations has confessedly no background of authority," the *Spectator* goes on to show how extremely precarious such usage would prove as a basis for national action. War, if it actually took place, would be with some such nation as France. England's naval superiority would be turned to account by the seizing the foreign possessions of her enemy, say in Indo-China, in the West Indies, and in the Pacific. It is plain that the enemy would be exceedingly anxious to return the injury. This she could do only by destroying British commerce and damaging ports and seacoast towns. But if the merchant ships and commerce can gain safety by having recourse to neutral flags, and if unfortified towns are rendered secure by their very defencelessness, only a few well-known places will remain open to attack. The combined strength of navy and land batteries will be ample for the defence of these. Thus

the enemy will be condemned either to wander round the coasts doing nothing, or to attack undefended towns. Can it be doubtful which alternative they will choose? This *reductio ad absurdum* the *Spectator* states as follows: "If England discarded all land fortifications, and laid all her sea towns open, would she thereby be allowed during war to remain inviolate and undisturbed by hostile squadrons, unless and until her enemies were prepared to land troops and actually begin a regular invasion?" The conclusion will, to most minds, be so irresistible, even without the further argument with which the writer supports it that its formal statement would be superfluous.

At a late meeting of the British Iron and Steel Institute at Edinburgh, an interesting paper was read by Mr. Cooper, the resident engineer of the new Forth Bridge, on that "last wonder of the world." This bridge was commenced in 1882 and is to be completed in 1889. Its total length is more than a mile and a half, and it is constructed with 26 spans, varying from 1710ft. to 25ft. In the centre for a space of 500ft. there will be a clear headway 150ft. high, under which the tallest ships may pass. The extreme height of the bridge is 361ft. above, its extreme depth 91 ft. below high water level. The three main piers consist each of a group of four masonry columns, filled with granite, 49ft. in diameter at the top and 36ft. high, which rest either on solid rock or concrete carried down, by means of caissons of 70ft. diameter, to the rock or boulder clay. About 53,000 tons of steel have been used in the superstructure, and about 140,000 cubic yards of masonry and concrete. It is estimated that the bridge will bear a stress on the parts subject to tension of from thirty to thirty-three tons on the square inch, and those subject to compression only of from thirty-four to thirty-seven tons per square inch. Thus absolute safety, it is believed, has been secured for the bridge under all possible conditions of weather, and a recurrence of such a disaster as that which befell the Tay Bridge rendered impossible. The weight of the structure itself, of the rolling loads which may pass over it, the pressure of the wind—estimated at 56lb. on the square inch, or at 8,000 tons on the main spans—and changes of temperature have all been taken carefully into account, and no element of danger that experience can suggest has been overlooked. Mr. Clark, the eminent American bridge-builder, said, in the discussion which followed the reading of the papers, that no wind, no gale, no tornado could upset the bridge. The main spans are being built on an entirely new principle, the only existing bridge at all similar being, it is said, the new Niagara cantilever.

As month after month passes by without bringing any reliable news of the intrepid Stanley, the hopes of his safety that have been so tenaciously cherished are gradually fading. The killing of Major Barttelot by natives in his employ naturally tends to increase the public despondency. It is, however, doubtful if this sad event proves anything but the personal arrogance of the murdered officer and his consequent unpopularity with the natives. Everything, apparently, depends upon the friendliness and good faith, or the opposite, of Tippoo Tib, by whom the carriers who committed the murder were furnished. The inference in regard to the chief's treachery are certainly far-fetched. Had he been hostile to the objects of the expedition or its commander, he could surely have found a less round-about method of displaying his hostility. Nothing further seems to have been heard of the "White Pasha," and the hope that he might prove to be Stanley is growing faint. Unless, however, the stories concerning this white leader are wholly mythical, there seems no reason why he may not be more likely to be Stanley than any one else. Other search expeditions will probably be organized, and it is by no means unlikely that the Government may eventually be drawn into connection with the movement. At present all is speculation and conjecture. It seems improbable that knowledge of the truth can be much longer delayed.

SOME serious misgivings have been excited in England by the news that the Indian Government is about to send a special mission to Cabul. The chief of the mission is Mr. Henry Durand, Foreign Secretary of the Government of India. Associated with him will be Sir D. Mackenzie, the Viceroy's private secretary, formerly special correspondent of the *Times* at St. Petersburg. They are to have a military escort, and will start from Peshawur about the beginning of October, expecting to be absent about a month. The Government's announcement of the mission, which is being sent on the special invitation of the Ameer, explains that its object is "to make him fully acquainted with the views of the Government on various questions which from time to time have been under discussion. There are no special circumstances on either side that have called forth this action on Abdurrahman's part, but his highness thinks the present a good