

THE CROWN PRINCE AND THE WAR PARTY.

The London *Morning Post* of the 4th January, an exceedingly well-informed paper, being in fact the recognized court organ, devotes a considerable space to two articles which appeared in the *Pesther Lloyd*, and the *Neus Freie Presse* of Vienna. This latter important organ occupies an entire page with the intrigues and machinations of the Junker and military clique against the Crown Prince and Princess and Sir Morell MacKenzie, and censures them in language alike severe and dignified. The former publishes a letter in the same strain, but in still stronger terms, from its Berlin correspondent.

The charges made place the whole matter in a startling light. These influential journals consider it at least doubtful whether the Crown Prince's disease is of a cancerous nature, and that, consequently, there was good reason for the recent cessation of the persistent attacks on the English savant, of the clique mentioned.

Had German science prevailed in May or June, and the Prince been subjected to an operation, there is little doubt, it is said, that he would before this have been a dead man, and it is more than hinted that the cancer idea may even have been an invention of the "national-medico-German-Junker and press" clique, which desires to hit the Crown Princess by attacking Sir Morell Mackenzie. There cannot, it is asserted, be the slightest doubt about this, as only just that class of paper fell upon the English physician, which notoriously would have felt the least aggrieved by the Crown Prince's death.

These are the organs of the "military party," which professes a chauvinism of bitter hostility to the Crown Prince's supposed peaceful tendencies, and regards the Princess as the greatest enemy of the present German home-policy. The Princess has consequently been exposed for a long time to the most infamous insinuations, and because Sir Morell MacKenzie—undoubtedly the first man in Europe in his specialty—was supposed to have been specially called in by her, "the whole pack threw themselves against the English doctor." The animosity against the Princess is not a little envenomed by a religious animus, as she is also regarded as the great adversary of an ultra orthodox court party, of which Dr. Stoeker, the Court Chaplain, is the guiding spirit.

The unexpected favorable change in the Prince's illness, and the possibility that, after all, he may become Emperor, seem to have caused the clique to adapt its tactics a little more to the actual circumstances of the case, as they have ceased openly to attack the Princess and insult Sir Morell MacKenzie.

There is, further, evidence that the "military party" deliberately schemed to impress upon the Prince an exaggerated idea of the immediate gravity of his case in order to induce him to abdicate.

The conspiracy has now broken down, and Sir Morell is left in peace, but so base an intrigue on the one hand, and, on the other, the uncompromising villainy of the episode of the forged letters, do not leave a very exalted opinion of the morality of German court-circles and politicians.

THE HOLY LAND.

Dr. Cunningham Geikie, a Scottish divine of considerable note, has recently published a work on the Holy Land, which, in its connection with biblical accounts, is of great interest. Dr. Geikie has traversed the length and breadth of Palestine, and has brought the most minute observation to bear upon the comparisons which naturally arise between its present state, and that with which we are to some extent acquainted from our study of the Bible, and of one or two classical writers. And we may here remark, that the activity and breadth of view of the biblical research of the last few years, not a little prompted by the influence of what is, not always fairly, called scepticism, has led to a much more intelligent appreciation of the Bible as history, than formerly prevailed. We are not, perhaps, assuming too much in saying that the perusal of the great Book in the spirit of mere supernaturalism and superstitious awe, is not calculated to give us all the benefit of its value, and that when the mind is enlarged to discern the action throughout a great portion of it of natural and national causes, and to measure it to some extent by the analogies impressed upon us by other history, our interest in it, and our estimate of its importance, are enormously enhanced. Entirely apart from its spiritual claims, the Bible, studied as we study secular history, is the most intensely interesting of records. It is a check, and a means of verification of other histories, and even throws light on discoveries of an antiquity prior to the range of its own more authentic relations.

The limited extent and barren desolation of a great part of Palestine in modern times have often led to a belief of the exaggeration of biblical enumerations of population, and the apparently improbable number of "fenced cities" so frequently impressed upon us. But there is abundant evidence that, if not strictly accurate, the statements fairly illustrate the truth. We are startled at the enormous force here and there ascribed to the Jewish and Israelitish armies, but we have to remember that a Hebrew army represented almost the entire population capable of bearing arms. That that population was extremely dense, we may easily allow from a consideration of the undoubted change which has taken place in climatic conditions, and, by consequence, in the fertility of the soil. There is no doubt that in the days of the Kings, and earlier, the Holy Land abounded in streams and brooks, and had a far greater rainfall than at present, and that this condition was due to the existence of forests and trees, which, having been destroyed by the ravages of war, and the recklessness of uncultivated races, the country has shared the fate of all others to which this misfortune has befallen.

That an enormous population may be prosperously supported on a limited area is proved by the condition of China to-day, while the accounts of the small Moorish kingdom of Granada seem, although tolerably well authenticated, to be almost fabulous. The simple habits of a race more or less primitive and essentially pastoral and agricultural, also constitute a factor in the possibilities. These considerations are of the greatest weight, and if we accord them their full value, we shall find no reason to doubt the correctness of the general impression of extreme populousness made upon us by the biblical narratives.

Fertility and population assumed, there need be no difficulty in crediting the number of cities, even in the absence of direct proof. But the direct proof is not wanting. Dr. Geikie only corroborates two or three other careful explorers, who have discovered the traces of fortified cities so thickly strewn over the country that their number and proximity seem almost incredible to the eye-witness himself. No doubt these cities were not large, but the ruins of their foundations are cyclopean in solidity, and plainly indicate that they must have been fortresses of great strength. Of the villages, which no doubt stood thickly interspersed between the walled cities, there is of course now no trace; indeed, it is difficult to fix with anything like certainty the sites of several mentioned in Scripture, and of some which are distinctly referred to as the scenes of important episodes.

Space fails us to point out some of the very interesting features of Dr. Geikie's book, but it is one which is eminently calculated to impart a fresh zest to a further study of the Sacred Volume.

LITTLE PARLIAMENTS.

We have more than once noticed in the press remarks to the effect that no one seemed to care much when the Provincial Legislature met. We are not at all surprised. It would indeed be a very hard job to pump up an interest in these one-horse talking ships.

The opening and closing of miniature Parliaments, which are little better than County Councils, with the Lilliputian pageantry attending those impressive ceremonies, does indeed so nearly approach to a solemn and very dull farce, that we are sometimes unable to refrain from a mild degree of wonder how the actors in them manage to retain their gravity,—there is so little for dignity to rest upon. And sometimes we think of the Roman augurs, who in the latter degenerate days, could not meet in the streets without laughing at each other in their sleeves.

On reflection, however, we remember that there are still many little fat pickings in the gift of the Local Governments, and patriots in plenty to uphold the "old flag and an appropriation." In our own, the members of the lower house wax eloquent over the reduced income of the Province. They point with too much truth to the detestable state of the roads, and to the fact that the road grants are entirely insufficient. They call loudly on the Dominion Government for assistance, but they blink with a lively instinct the facts that we are altogether "too much governed"—that thousands of dollars are annually expended in keeping up Provincial Cabinets, with the various petty portfolios, their little Premiers, their little Attorney-Generals, ("all Honorable men")—and all with snug little salaries that might fairly be remodeled at a great saving of expense—and that all the Legislative Councils should be abolished, and the Lower Houses reduced to half their present numbers, or merged into a joint Parliament of the three Maritime Provinces. They have been known to go so far as to recommend the disestablishment of Upper Chambers, but were politicians ever known to seek the abolition of their own offices, or to advocate the reduction of unnecessary billets so supremely useful for allotment to their friends? We think not, and, as we are reported to be largely over-running our Provincial income, it seems time for the electors to investigate the matter, and by prompt action and vigorous agitation, impress upon our local rulers the necessity of immediate reforms. The boon of local self government granted to the counties, through the establishment of municipal councils, has paved the way to reduce the number of members from each county to one. The county authorities now relieve the local M.'s-P.'s from what used to be their most arduous duties, and one member should now be able to fully attend to the parliamentary duties of his county. A Maritime Union with a central seat of government, a parliament with a single chamber and one cabinet, would govern with ease a territory which now groans under the expense of three Parliaments, three Cabinets, and a host of red tape officials. Maritime Union would save thousands of dollars that could be applied to putting our roads in good repair, would bind together with stronger ties the three Provinces, whose interests are almost identical, and whose union would go far to secure at Ottawa a more equitable balance of power.

For the benefit of such of our readers as have never spent a winter in Labrador, Alaska or other countries of the far North, we will relate some interesting facts illustrative of their manner of keeping Christmas. The winter residences of the Esquimaux are made of blocks of solid snow with thin sheets of ice for windows. Thus the glazier in that country carries his material for patching up windows in an ice wagon. Esquimaux children hang up their sealskin socks Christmas Eve. They, like our own little folks, appreciate a pair of skates or a sled, but in place of candy they long for blubber. When a young Esquimaux wakes up in the morning and finds his stocking full of blubber he is happy. If he doesn't—well, he blubbers all the same. Their Christmas dinner is a rare feast for them. It consists of a chunk of raw whale with a sauce of rose-colored hair-oil, washed down with a flagon of seal's blood. Tallow candles with dip are served as dessert. *Texas Siftings.*