

OUR ENGLISH LETTER.

(From our Special Correspondent.)

LONDON, December 6, 1871.

It is hard to conceive by what mode of reasoning an intelligent British Republican builds himself up so firmly in his creed as to make it the subject of public agitation. That the select rabble who hold their meetings in the "Hole-in-the-Wall" should pass resolutions against the Monarchy, and should extend their cruel patronage and approval to any respectable man who publicly avows his preference for a Republic, is as natural as nature itself. But Sir Charles Dilke must have arrived at his deep political conclusion by some mental process more or less rational, and what this process may have been, what course it took, and at what point it diverges and made its immense slope into perfect irrationality, is a puzzle that must be felt to be extremely difficult to solve, however interesting and instructive the solution might be. Sir Charles himself does not throw any light on the question, for his lecture, which has had the advantage of several redeliveries, is unusually barren of political thought of any kind; and Mr. Bright's suggestion that the honourable Baronet is a young man of clever parts, who does not know how to conduct himself for the general benefit of the Liberal cause, is merely the cynical remark of an experienced politician on the provoking escapades of a disciple, probably of great genius, who is only too vain or too independent to work smoothly in the party traces. As an element of the puzzle, it would be desirable to know Mr. Bright's own final conclusion, after forty years' admiration of American institutions, on the question as propounded by Sir Charles Dilke, whether the abolition of the Monarchy, and a complete and unalloyed ascendancy of the Republican principles of the Constitution, under an Elective President and other necessary Republican forms, would be for the good or ill of the British people?

The question is so absurd that we will not affect to believe that Mr. Bright or any British statesman could have any other answer but the one. The system of government in every country of free and popular institutions is always under a certain amount of disrepute. It is the unavoidable result of the action of parties under a free and constitutional régime to subject the Administration to a severe and constant criticism, which, however wholesome in the main, has the effect of producing a certain amount of ill odour and dissatisfaction. If under Liberal Governments in this country there usually happens to be more bad savour and discontent than at other periods, the real grievances being supplemented by hypothetical and chimerical grievances fostered and elicited under the auspices of the Government itself, this may be the misfortune or the weakness of the Liberal party; but it does not affect in any degree a question of such magnitude as Monarchy versus Republic, nor hinder any man, whether Liberal or Conservative, in forming a fair estimate of the substantial merits of the system of government under which he lives. A Liberal of the present day, even with no other notion in his head but that of the supreme will of the people, and all the good ends of government which that may be supposed to guarantee, who does not see in the British Monarchy not only a reflection symbolically of the deepest popular will, but in its legislative and executive action a flexibility and integrity of response to the popular will, as well as an impartial administration of justice, a rectitude in public finances, and a solicitude for the social wellbeing and service of the community, to which there is nothing equal in any Government in the world, and to which that of the United States presents only a painful contrast, must be not only thankless for great mercies, but a blind and unseeing person, either hopelessly ignorant, or enlightened only by an ideal perfection of government for which he is indebted solely to his imagination. It is not without reason that political thinkers have discovered in the British Constitution an unflinching theme of admiration, and that foreigners who come to study our institutions and their results—if with prejudice, with a knowledge and experience of government elsewhere which our Republicans lack—bear uniform testimony to its stability and freedom, its popular spirit, and its wonder-working powers. That much of this rare virtue is due to the Republican principle with which the British Monarchy is impregnated and harmonised, and that the British Constitution is in reality a Republic under Monarchical forms, only renders the case so much the plainer and stronger; because, if we enjoy all the advantages of a Republic without the disadvantages of that form of government pure and simple, there must be all the less motive, or no motive whatever, for desiring a Republican revolution; and if the British Republic, under a Monarchical modification, has attained results of good government which no other Republic has been able to attain, the virtue of Monarchy as a constituent element of government must be allowed to shine forth with greater lustre, and to acquire a relative weight and value to which in its pure and unrelated form it could lay no claim. But all this, which is simply the A B C of the question, learnt and understood by all, only leaves the unfortunate Sir Charles Dilke outside a greater puzzle and conundrum than ever.

In one respect the Republican Baronet has probably not been quite fairly treated in the abundant castigation he has received from his Liberal contemporaries. He attacked the Monarchy on the ground chiefly of expense, and the Liberal organs, knowing well that the Monarchy costs the people nothing at all, that the Civil List expenditure has for generations been fixed by the will of the nation in Parliament, that her Majesty has no control over it, and can certainly not appropriate a farthing of it beyond her own private allowance, and that the property surrendered by the Crown to the nation when the Civil List arrangement was made is more than equal to the whole amount of it, have with general accord condemned Sir Charles for choosing this particular line of operations. They cannot see any dignity in attempting to sweep away a great institution of a thousand years' standing, the centre of our laws and liberties, and of the whole social and political fabric of the realm, on a mere count and reckoning of a balance *pro* or *con* of twopence halfpenny. They would like that Sir Charles had opened much deeper trenches, and had proceeded to blow up the Monarchy in a more scientific

style. But if Sir Charles had adopted the only possible line of attack, this complaint must be essentially unjust. If there is to be any knife-grinding, there must be a story of some sort to tell; and Sir Charles Dilke, there can be no doubt, has got a hold of it, and has full possession of the only thread of narrative that can be thrummed with any popular effect against the British Monarchy.

But what insanity, what waste of precious powers and opportunities, and what absolute folly may not even the British Monarchy, with the aid and sanction of all its sources of authority—in Baronets and Radical M. P.'s—throw up now and again on the surface of its affairs! The strongest argument to be conceived against the British Monarchy is Sir Charles Dilke himself. For Sir Charles is no ordinary demagogue, and from all faculty of being a demagogue we quite readily and cordially acquit him. But he has had splendid opportunities of enlightenment on all topics most interesting to his countrymen, and, what is creditable to his energy, he has made a "tour of the world," as well as written a narrative of his tour, very pleasing to readers of the notes of travellers who have no idea in their heads but to please. He has visited the United States, and might have got there, with little effort, an insight into the working of Republican institutions, and have learned without any effort at all the universal respect felt for the Queen of England; he has been in the Australian and other British Colonies, and might have seen how, under perfect freedom and independence of self-government, the heart of the whole Colonial community thrills at the name of the common Sovereign; and he has been in India, and in all our settlements in the East, and if possessed of any power of thinking, or sense of responsibility, might have come home with some faint consciousness of the vast influence of the British Monarchy, and of the dreadful shock which any overturn at home would give to the vital interests of hundreds of millions of his fellow-creatures. But it does not follow that in sending any boy to school you make him wise, or that in coming back, indeed, he will be much better than he was when sent away; and for any political wisdom Sir Charles Dilke appears to have derived from his "tour of the world," he might as well have accompanied Daniel O'Rourke in his famous trip to the moon.

NEWCASTLE ON TYNE, Dec. 13th, 1871.

I understand Robert Chambers, the famous boat rower, is coming to Canada to act as a trainer.

James Taylor, of the Winship Crew, is going shortly to retire from rowing, and become a trainer of gentlemen amateurs.

Some pitmen are to leave shortly for the silver mines in Canada.

Harry Kelley, the famous rower, is going to take up his residence at Newcastle.

The "Queen's Messenger" newspaper is shortly to start again, and there is also some talk of the "Tomahawk" starting.

Mr. George Rendel, of the Elswick Ordnance Works, has invented a new gun carriage for field purposes, and Captain Noble, of the same factory, has invented a new kind of detonator for the exploding of shells.

An incident in the life of the late Sir J. Y. Simpson, and from the circumstances connected with it, not likely to be extensively known, is worth recording. A poor seafaring lad, a fisherman belonging to the town of Nairn, on the Moray Firth, had for several years been afflicted with a troublesome cough, and had "suffered many things of many physicians, and spent all he had, and was nothing bettered, but rather grew worse." He had heard, however, that there were some very skilful medical men in Edinburgh; and, with the determination which characterises many of the seafaring class, he resolved that, poor as he was, he would go to the capital. Accordingly, hearing of a vessel lying in the harbour which was about to sail for Leith, he made application to the captain to be taken on board, offering to "work his passage." In the course of the voyage he told some of the sailors his object in visiting Edinburgh; and they advised him to go to Sir James Simpson, which he accordingly resolved to do. It is well known that it was often a very difficult matter to get an interview with that gentleman—even after coming a longer distance than the fisherman had done—and frequently the great and titled of this and other lands had to wait for hours and even days before they were admitted to a consultation, Sir James being so fully occupied. In these circumstances there was not much hope of a speedy interview for this patient. However, nothing daunted, he went to his residence, rang the bell and told the servant that "James Main, a fisherman from Nairn, wanted to see the doctor." Contrary to expectation, he was at once admitted to the consulting-room, stated his case, and after a short examination Sir James said "You've applied to a good many doctors already, have you not?" "Yes, sir—a good many." "Have you gone to the Great Physician, James?" Main was silent. "Well, my good man," resumed Sir James, "I advise you to go to Him. I am sorry I can do you little good. You had better go home and just take as good care of yourself as you can." The fisherman was very much affected, and evidently impressed by what had been said to him, and thrusting his hand into his pocket, and taking out a few coins, he said: "What have I to pay you, doctor?" "My friend," said Sir James, patting him familiarly on the shoulder, "I don't want any money from you, I ask only an interest in your prayers. Pray for me, James! Goodbye! Don't forget to go to the Great Physician." After thanking the physician for his kindness and bidding him good bye, he returned to Nairn; and the event soon proved as Sir James had indicated. And there is reason to hope that what the good doctor said to him about the Great Physician was "a word in season."

Admiral Sir Wm. Ramsay died yesterday morning at the residence in Edinburgh of his brother, the Venerable Dean of the Diocese. Sir William, who was never married, has died at the age of seventy-five. He entered the navy in 1809, and went through considerable service. He was created K. C. B. in 1869. Sir William took great interest in many of the charitable institutions throughout Edinburgh, and his loss will be sincerely mourned by many.

Sir John Brown & Co., of Sheffield, are busy making some armour plates for Palmer's shipbuilding company, by a substitute for the iron known as "spiegeleisen," commonly used in the manufacture of steel. This new system has been tried very successfully in the manufacture of plates, experimentally. There is a likelihood of its being made at Jarrow, and a new furnace for that purpose will be erected.

Mr. Sergeant Cox will shortly publish a volume, entitled

"Spiritualism answered by Science," detailing the experiments that satisfied him that the phenomena investigated are purely physical and in no manner produced by spirits of the dead.

Mr. John Saunders has in preparation a novel entitled, "Israel Mort," which will be published in the spring.

The article on Byron and Tennyson in the last number of the *Quarterly* is, it is rumoured, from the pen of the editor, Dr. W. Smith.

Mr. Arthur Helps will shortly publish a new work in one volume, called "Thoughts upon Government," dedicated to Lord Derby.

The whole of the 1st edition of the 1st volume of Mr. Foster's "Life of Charles Dickens" has been subscribed for by the trade.

R. E.

THE PRINCE OF WALES.

The announcement on Friday, December 8th, of the death, from typhoid fever, of Albert Edward, Prince of Wales, and heir-apparent of the British Throne, created the most profound excitement not only throughout England, but all North America. When, later in the day, this report was contradicted, there was scarcely any abatement of anxiety, for it was felt that his demise was likely to occur at any moment.

The Prince was born on the 9th of November, 1841, at Buckingham Palace, London, amid the general rejoicings of the people. Thanks to the judicious care of the late Prince Albert, he received an education of a somewhat sounder and more substantial character than that which usually falls to the lot of princes.

On his seventeenth birthday, the Prince assumed the serious duties of manhood by being appointed colonel in the army. Soon afterwards he determined to pursue his studies at Rome. After a brief visit to his sister, the Princess Frederick William of Prussia, at Berlin, he set out for Italy. Before leaving England, however, he performed the first public act of his life by presenting a stand of colours to the 100th, or Prince of Wales' Royal Canadian Regiment of Foot.

The Prince arrived in Rome towards the end of January, 1859, and for the first time in many centuries a prince of the blood royal of England was received by the Holy Father.

He returned on the 25th of June, 1859, and in the summer of the following year embarked for the United States, accompanied by the Duke of Newcastle.

In 1862 the Prince made his first visit to the East. On his way he called on Francis Joseph, Emperor of Austria, at Vienna, and in March was at Cairo. Subsequently he passed through the Holy Land, and in returning to England paid a formal visit to the Emperor and Empress of the French.

On the 5th of February, 1863, at the opening of Parliament, he for the first time took his seat as member of the British House of Peers, his introduction being the occasion of the most brilliant and solemn ceremonies.

In accordance with an announcement made by the Queen, his mother, two years previously, the Prince was married on the 10th of March, 1863, to Princess Alexandra of Denmark, an amiable and beautiful young lady, who succeeded very soon in endearing herself to the English people. The marriage was celebrated with great splendour. It has since been blessed with six offspring, only one of whom is dead.

In the latter part of 1869 he again visited the East, accompanied by his wife, and attended the inauguration of the Suez Canal.

The last series of acts which brought him before the public, was his visit to Ireland in the spring of last year. It was hoped that his appearance in state would do much to quiet the rebellious spirit of the Irish people; but the tour ended in a riot at Phoenix Park, Dublin. After this, his Royal Highness made a hasty retreat from the Irish capital, and returned to the observance of his everyday routine life, alternating his residence from Sandringham to Windsor and Marlborough House.

The Prince's children are: Albert Victor, born in 1864; George, born in 1865; Louisa, born in 1867; Alexandra, born in 1868; Augusta, born in 1869, and another son, who died shortly after its birth, some short time since.

After his marriage, the Prince frequently held levees and gave receptions, in place of the Queen, whose sorrow for the death of her husband made her very reluctant to appear in public. Some little "unpleasantness" occurred in regard to a sort of informal demand made by the Prince to have his allowance from the public funds enlarged in consequence of being called upon to perform these duties. A loud outcry was made, to the effect that the Queen ought herself to reimburse him for the expense he was thus compelled to undergo, and after stirring up considerable discontent, the matter was permitted to drop.

There is a marked similarity in the symptoms of the disease with which the Prince of Wales is afflicted, and those which were presented by the complaint which carried off his father, the late Prince Albert, in such a sudden manner.

EXPECTATION.

The ladies are waiting in "expectation," as on New Year's day it is their proud privilege to stay at home. The gentlemen, poor fellows! must betake themselves out of doors, and as fast as horseflesh, aided by smooth runners on the crispy sleigh track can carry them, they bound along the streets, now calling here, now there to pay their respects to their lady acquaintances. We believe that Monday last was very punctually observed in Montreal; that the good ladies in "expectation" were not disappointed, and, as the weather was extremely mild, and the day a very beautiful one, the first of January 1872 was enjoyed by our people to their full hearts' content.

Sir Charles Wheatstone has invented a self-registering apparatus by which the temperature, say at the top of Mont Blanc, might be seen at Chamounix. Interesting for the people who live in those two places.

A Kansas paper informs the public that "Mr. —, of Missouri, got to owning horses that didn't belong to him, and the next thing he knew, he couldn't get his feet down to the ground."

A western journal offers this inducement: "All subscribers paying in advance will be entitled to a first-class obituary notice in case of death."