

zation, for the hopes of future profits based on the experience of the most successful companies in England, etc. In spite of all this the evils of private management are considered so unbearable that city after city is purchasing the existing works, and it is stated on good authority that one of the first steps of the re-organized City of London will probably be the acquisition of the gas works of the present companies.

According to the report of gas undertakings in the United Kingdom, made to Parliament in 1884, there were at that time on the islands more than 160 towns and cities which owned and managed their own works, and the number is increasing every day. Now, what has been the result of public management?

According to Mr. Arthur Silverthorne, a prominent English expert who has given much attention to this subject, "the event has proved that nothing could be more felicitous than the way in which the municipal authorities have managed even the largest gas undertakings confided to their care, and I fearlessly assert that these unpaid bodies have achieved far superior results to those obtained under the directorate of private companies." In spite of the high price paid for the gas works of private companies, varying from 150 to 400 per cent., and averaging about 250 per cent. of face value of stock and from four to ten times the value of the plant, they have nearly uniformly succeeded (1) in paying interest on debt contracted to purchase the works, (2) in lowering the price of gas to consumers, and (3) in handing over a handsome surplus to the City Treasury. There are several reasons why this should be perfectly possible, and the statistics leave no doubt of its being actual.

The city of Birmingham, under the lead of the irrepressible Mr. Chamberlain, purchased its works in 1875, which were earning at the time of purchase only £82,290 per year. By lowering the price, thus largely increasing the consumption, and introducing improved machinery and processes, the city increased the earnings by 1879, within four years, to £165,000, *i. e.*, it earned 35 per cent. dividend instead of 17 per cent. The striking results of such public management were made the basis of increased demand on the part of other private companies whose works were desired by the municipality.

The city of Nottingham acquired the gas works in 1875, when the price was at 3s. 4d., and reduced the price within ten years to 2s. 2d., with the following result in amount consumed and profit realized:

Year.	Price per 1,000 c. f.	Amt. consumed in millions.	Profit.
1877	2s. 10d.	662	£5,783
1878	2s. 8d.	723	12,525
1880	2s. 6d.	891	23,000
1882	2s. 4d.	1,040	27,615
1884	2s. 2d.	1,163	33,169

The city of Leeds has a still more striking record. The authorities have managed the undertaking so well that they were asked recently to reduce the price to 1 shilling per 1,000 cubic feet.

Germany seems to be seeking the solution of the same problem in the same direction. In 1860 there were in Germany 266 gas works, of which 66 belonged to the municipalities and 200 to private companies. In 1883 there were 600 establishments, of which 290 were public and 310 were

private, the ratio changing in twenty-five years from 25 per cent. to nearly 50 per cent. in favor of public undertakings. Even now, of the 164 leading cities 88 own and manage their own works, and if we take Germany as a whole, the public works are far more important than the private works. The capitalized value of city undertakings is nearly double that of private works, being \$143,000,000 to \$78,000,000. The inhabitants of cities supplied with public works amount to 7,000,000 as opposed to 4,500,000 in those supplied by private companies. The public works consume more than 65 per cent. of the coal used in the manufacture of gas.

It would be eminently worth while for some of our experts to make a thorough examination of this whole subject, both in this country and Europe. It would be very desirable to know exactly how these public works are managed, and the secret of their undoubted and increasing success. They seem destined, in Europe at least, to supplant entirely the private undertaking.

#### THE OLD IRISH REMEDY.

THE report that after much debate and cogitation the only measure the Tory Cabinet can agree on for the solution of the Irish difficulty is a new coercion bill, derives much probability from the history of all previous legislation in London on the same subject. In fact, the readiness of the English mind, after tormenting itself for a while over remedial measures for Ireland, to put them aside and fall back on simple force has been almost comically persistent.

On this point the recently published volume of Mr. Barry O'Brien's 'Fifty Years of Concessions to Ireland' (London: Sampson Low & Co.) is most instructive. The war between the tenants and the landlords, which slumbered for a few years after the Union, broke out with renewed atrocity in 1807. Murder, arson, mayhem, and resistance to the police, all caused by the land question, raged all over the country during the following forty years. During this period a swarm of observers, English and foreign, visited Ireland and wrote on this question. A Government Commission, too, of which the Earl of Devon was chairman, investigated and reported on it. All told the same tale. All said that the root of the Irish trouble was the dependence of the Irish tenant on the landlord's discretion, and the barbarous indifference of the landlord to his condition; and his readiness to confiscate the tenant's improvements. Nevertheless, during the whole of that period—from 1807 (and in 1807 the evil was already a century old) to 1847, not one legislative attempt was made to remedy it, but plenty of time was found to pass coercion bills. In 1800-1 there was an Insurrection Act, and a Suspension of the Habeas Corpus. In 1803-4 these measures were continued. In 1807-8-9 there were an Insurrection Act and Martial Law. In 1814-15-16-17 there was an Insurrection Act and Martial Law. In 1822-3-4 there was an Insurrection Act. In 1825-6-7-8-9 there was an Act for the suppression of the Catholic Association, which was carrying on the agitation for the emancipation of the Catholics. In 1831-2 there was an Act prohibiting the possession of arms, called out by the desperate resistance of

the peasantry to the collection of tithes for the Protestant clergy. In 1833-4 there was a Coercion Act, which was continued into 1835.

Between 1829 and 1835 the English mind was at last sufficiently moved by Irish turbulence to emancipate the Catholics, and stop the levying of Protestant tithes, but neither violence nor agitation could induce it to touch the land question, until in 1849 the Encumbered Estates Bill was passed, providing an easy process for the sale of the estates of bankrupt landlords, and enabling them to give "a parliamentary title" to the purchasers. But for the tenants nothing was done.

In the meantime, however, there had been plenty of coercion. In 1843-4-5 the possession of arms was prohibited. In 1847 there was a Crime and Outrage Act. In 1848-9 there was a Habeas Corpus Suspension Act, a Crime and Outrage Act, and a Removal of Aliens Act. From 1850 to 1855 there was a Crime and Outrage Continuance Act. In 1856-7 there was a Peace Preservation Act. From 1858 to 1863 there was a Peace Preservation Continuance Act. In 1865 there was also a Peace Preservation Continuance Act. From 1866 to 1869 there was a Habeas Corpus Suspension Act. In 1870-1 there was a Peace Preservation Act. From 1873 to 1880 there were a Peace Preservation Act and a Protection of Life and Property Act. In 1881-2 there was Forster's Coercion Act, and in 1883-5 there has been the Crimes Act.

During this period there was a Land Act, passed in 1860, which, as it simply allowed the tenant to be paid for his improvements if he made them with the landlord's consent, proved a total failure. In 1866 the Whigs made an attempt to give the tenant property in improvements which the landlord had not forbidden. In 1867 the Tories proposed to go further than this, and create a Commissioner of Improvements who should decide what improvements the tenant might make without the landlord's consent. But neither proposal came to anything, and the war went on. In 1869 Gladstone at last disestablished the Church, and in 1870 passed the first real remedial land act—"the best measure, perhaps the only good measure," Froude said, "which has been passed for Ireland in 200 years." But, like all other Irish remedial measures, it did not go far enough, for it left it in the power of the tenants to contract themselves out of the purview of the Act—that is, to agree in writing not to avail themselves of its provisions, and therefore, as the *British Quarterly Review* said in 1880, "Some landlords set themselves deliberately to defeat its provisions; . . . others required their tenants to sign leases deliberately drawn to defeat its provisions." So it also proved nugatory. Consequently the Land Act of 1881 was the first really effective attempt to settle the land question, but it, also, came too late.

We thus see that while English opinion in eighty years was able to consider and pass twenty-four coercion acts, it was only able to settle on four remedial acts—the Catholic Emancipation Act, the Tithes Commutation Act, the Church Disestablishment Act, and the Land Act of 1881; and the first three of these really simply provided for the cessation of gross oppression. In truth the whole story

of the government of Ireland by the Imperial Parliament since 1800, as told by Mr. O'Brien—with great calm, let us add, and profuse citation of authorities—is so absurd that it may fairly be called “light reading,” and, in spite of the bulk of the volume, may be taken up by the fireside, in the evening, for pure entertainment. If the Tories should now, after profound reflection on the home-rule problem, bring in simply a good rattling coercion bill, it would cap the climax, or in other words give the finishing touch to a sorry farce.

#### THE FRENCH JEFFERSONIANS.

THE French fill their civil service by non-competitive examination, but the places are practically held during good behavior, so that the spoils system, as we know it, has never grown up, vacancies being rare. Since the establishment of the Republic and the seizure of all power by the Chambers, however, office-seeking, in the absence of the competitive system, has become a veritable nuisance. During the existence of the “*scrutin d'arrondissement*,” as it was called, when each electoral district had one member, the voters got into the way of looking on him, as many voters look on members of Congress here, as merely an agent for getting places or favors for them from the Government, and in France the number of places and favors the Government has to bestow is enormous.

Under the operation of this system, it was becoming rapidly impossible for any Ministry to keep in power except by an elaborate and extensive system of bribery. The individual member, in order to retain his seat, had to get tobacco licenses, furloughs, transfers, places, and decorations for his constituents, and the Cabinet had to give them, or rather promise them, in order to secure his vote. It was under the pressure of this terrible burden that Jules Ferry tried to justify the Tonquin and similar colonizing schemes, by pointing out the opening it would offer for the young Frenchmen who now pester the Government for small offices. One of the strongest arguments in favor of the “*scrutin de liste*,” or departmental ballot, by which all the deputies of the Department are elected on a general ticket, was that, no one member representing any particular district, no particular set of voters would have a special claim on him, and the whole body would thus be delivered from the office-seekers. But the traditions of French politics have proved too strong even for the *scrutin de liste*. Frenchmen cannot unlearn in a year or two the lesson which two centuries of highly centralized government have taught them—that everybody connected with the ruling power has unlimited influence. M. Clovis Hugues, the well-known Radical Deputy, sends to the *Lanterne*, as an explanation to his constituents, the following extraordinary account—after making allowance for all exaggerations—of the present state of affairs. He says:

“Every day, each deputy receives on the average twenty letters asking for personal services in no way connected with the pending questions of politics. In all these letters there is an abounding confidence in the fortunate member. He has only to make the smallest sign with the ends of his fingers to realize the dreams of his correspondent. With a word subscribed to the application, he can distribute tobacco licenses, obtain pardons,

dispense charity, bring home emigrants, reverse or modify judicial decisions, get furloughs for soldiers and decorations for buttonholes, procure the dismissal of functionaries, find wet nurses and lost umbrellas, get ministerial decisions changed, appease creditors, negotiate marriages, settle divorces, mollify mothers-in-law, hush up scandals, pull candidates through examinations, appoint prefects, sub-prefects, vice-consuls, Republican bishops, and clerks in Government offices, in banking houses, in the offices of great corporations, and even in those of private individuals—and all this in a single day.”

He goes on to say that every deputy has always about fifty applications for office on foot either in the post or the telegraph office. He sends to the Minister of War every month about thirty applications for furloughs, changes of regiment, or discharge. To the Minister of Finance he sends every quarter about sixty applications for tobacco licenses. Every January and July he recommends about fifteen unknown persons for the Legion of Honor. M. Hugues's own correspondence amounts, he says, to 500 letters per month on the average, and he answers every letter, promising to support the request, whatever it may be, but of course he does not do it. How can he? “How could he,” M. Hugues asks, “and give any attention to the affairs of the country. In the morning, when he might be studying the questions of the day, he would be growing mouldy in the ante-chambers of the appointing officers. In the Chamber during the session he would be writing letters, or paying with a vote against his conscience for the services the Minister was to render him.”

For the habit of asking general favors of the Government there is, of course, no cure but the improvement in the political education of the French people, which time and the practice of parliamentary government will bring about. But the office-begging nuisance can never be abated by anything but the competitive system, which the French will eventually have to adopt. No pass examination will suffice, because this still leaves the appointing officer an enormous discretion. The competitive system, on the other hand, delivers him from importunity, by giving a small number of the ablest competitors an exclusive claim to the place, and thus furnishes both Minister and Deputy with the only sure defence against this great curse and weakness of modern democratic government—the desire of the incompetent, the lazy, the vicious, and the unsuccessful, to quarter themselves on the public treasury.

#### CAN THE ENGLISH CONSTITUTION BE AMERICANIZED?

OXFORD, January 1, 1886.

To Conservative thinkers who have accepted the advent of the democracy in England, the institutions of the United States present (as I pointed out in my last letter) three points of attraction—the independence of the President, the authority of the Senate, the immutability of the Constitution. Whether these characteristics of American republicanism can by any imitation or adaptation of transatlantic morals be impressed upon the democratic Constitution of Great Britain, is already an inquiry of more than academic interest. It may any day become a question of pressing moment. My aim in this letter is to examine how far, in the three matters which I have mentioned, the Constitution of the United States in reality excels the English State-system (to use an expression of Mr. Frederic Har-

ison's), and how far the provisions of your Constitution present a model for imitation by English statesmen.

There is assuredly something striking in the contrast between the position of a President such as President Cleveland and the situation of a Premier such as Mr. Gladstone. It will, I suppose, be admitted on all hands that Mr. Cleveland does not possess anything like the amount of power wielded by Mr. Gladstone when in office, or for that matter when out of it. No declaration of policy by the President would, I presume, have anything like the effect on the public life of America which has been produced by the mere rumor of Mr. Gladstone's adherence to home rule; or which would result from an announcement that Lord Salisbury had determined at all costs to resist every demand for anything like the legislative independence of Ireland. But if the extent and area of the President's authority are much narrower than the sphere of a Premier's influence, such powers as an American President possesses can be exercised with an independence unknown to the most powerful of English Ministers. Whether administrative reforms shall be really carried out, whether public offices shall or shall not be treated as spoils belonging to the victors in a party contest, appears, to an Englishman at least, to depend at the present moment wholly on the will of President Cleveland. Grant that his policy may seriously affect, one way or another, his chance of reelection, still, during his four years' term, his conduct is controlled pretty nearly by his own judgment and conscience. No vote of Congress can remove him from power. The dissatisfaction of his own supporters may doubtless be unpleasant, but it can hardly restrain his action. A Prime Minister, on the other hand, is, even at the height of his power, liable to be overthrown by any change of feeling among his supporters. No statesman ever looked more powerful than Lord Palmerston after the elections of 1857, yet two years did not pass before a Palmerstonian House of Commons dismissed him from office, and dismissed him for insisting, with perfect justice, that attempts to assassinate a foreign potentate must be treated in England as crimes. Contrast Palmerston's inability to carry through, in the face of temporary unpopularity, an enactment passed a year or two later without opposition or comment, with the ease with which Lincoln surrendered Slidell and Mason to England, and you have the measure of the difference between a President's independence of momentary popular sentiment and the absolute dependence of even a powerful minister on the public favor.

A Prime Minister is, in short, a party leader. A President is a ruler appointed by the nation. The one has too much influence and possesses too little independence. The other holds very limited powers, but, for the exercise of his authority, he is responsible only to his conscience and his country. To thinkers who believe that the weak point of democratic government is instability of purpose, there is something very fascinating in the notion of substituting a President for a Premier. The change promises two advantages. The country will, it is hoped, be freed from dependence on the sudden resolutions or still more sudden irresolutions of great party leaders. The real head of the executive will at the same time be delivered from the necessity of studying each momentary change of public feeling. Still, a moment's consideration shows that whatever American institutions may be transplanted to England, the Presidency is not one of them. His independence would of itself be absolutely fatal to the working of the Government. Opposition between the House of Commons and the Executive would produce temporary paralysis of the