

DILEMMA OF THE MASSACHUSETTS INDEPENDENTS.

It is clear from the opinions expressed by the Independents in Massachusetts that it would take very little to cause them to nominate a candidate of their own for the Governorship of the State. The unanimous determination is to strike at the ring which has captured the Democratic party the severest blow possible. To give an overwhelming vote to the Republican candidate is obviously the most direct and practical way of accomplishing this end. But many cannot bring themselves to vote for a man who has proved himself both weak and untrustworthy. Gov. Ames's treatment of the bill exempting soldier veterans from the State Civil-Service Law has aroused in every Independent a feeling of profound contempt. Upon Mr. Ames's nomination for the Governorship last autumn, a member of the Reform Club waited upon him and asked whether he would veto a soldiers' exemption bill should one be brought up again. Mr. Ames in reply asked what the Republican platform said upon the subject, and when he was told that it specifically pledged the party to resist all "open or covert attacks upon the reform," said he would carry out that declaration to its fullest extent. When a few months later such a bill did come before him, he was again waited upon by members of the Reform Club in their private capacity to request him to veto the bill. He showed these gentlemen a veto which he had already prepared and signed, and they went away feeling fully satisfied. They should never have left him until the veto was beyond recall; for as soon as their backs were turned he unhappily met a State Senator who told him that such a veto would lose him 10,000 soldier votes, and he thereupon promptly tore up the veto.

Having to choose between a Republican of this sort and a Democratic demagogue, the Independents naturally hardly know which way to turn. Some of them would actually vote for the Prohibitionist candidate, although they favor only high license combined with local option. Others would not vote at all. In such a state of affairs, it is not surprising that the more aggressive Independents should demand that a citizens' meeting be called to nominate a respectable candidate. The Democrats would probably rejoice in such action, since they have no hope of the Independents' vote being cast for Lovering, and would like to see it switched off from Ames. The Republicans, on the other hand, would probably be angry enough to take pleasure in legislating away, next winter, the late decision of the Supreme Court, which greatly curtails the evils of the Soldiers' Exemption Bill. In short, the surface effects of nominating an Independent candidate would be bad, and the so-called practical men of the two parties would smile in pity at what they would term the fanaticism and impracticability of the Massachusetts Mugwump.

But we trust that the Massachusetts Independents will take no such action, however deep their disappointment may be with both of the existing parties. They must not fall into the state of mind of those Blaine men who think that one use of party organizations is to enable people to give vent to feelings of love or hatred, hope or despair. The object of parties

is to win victories at the polls, so as to get certain ideas carried out in administration or legislation. Organizations which have no such expectation, and are merely intended for the mutual edification or comfort of the members, are not parties, but churches. No independent party running tickets of its own could expect to have any influence on politics except that which any man has who preaches the value of virtue and the loathsomeness of vice. They could not elect any candidates of their own, and they would very probably, indirectly and in spite of themselves, aid in the election of the worst candidates of the Republican or Democratic party. This might not be true if they had a broader platform, and one of more general interest, to offer to the public. But the issue they present is a narrow one. It is quite broad enough to stick into the platforms of the great parties, but it is not broad enough to furnish the Independents with a platform of their own. They would be compelled to piece it out with various things besides civil-service reform and administrative purity, about which Independents are either divided or feel with different degrees of warmth; and it would then have that worst defect of a creed, an air of patchwork. Besides this, they would have to set up candidates of various degrees of merit, whom they would be compelled to defend through thick and thin in the usual party fashion, and about whom some of the weaker brethren would probably lie or prevaricate freely, after the manner of the Blaineites. From all this would come first great scandal, and then the utter discredit of the very name of Independent or Reformer.

Moreover, it is needless to point out the risk in these days, when the mass to be moved at every election is so vast, which the reformers or preachers of a new political gospel run in standing up to be counted. The history of the Liberty party, which certain Abolitionists started in Garrison's day, is full of warning and instruction on this point. Their strength lay in their moral force. This force was enormous, and, as the result proved, great enough to tear the Union to pieces. But as a party they were contemptible, and when they went to the polls seemed ridiculous. In fact, the only way for the Independents to make themselves felt in politics is to keep themselves an unknown quantity, and give their help at the polls to the party which is least bad, until the time comes when they will be able to ask the question, Which of the two is the better?

THE BALTIMORE REFORMERS.

THE Baltimore reformers are hard at work under the most trying circumstances. The whole machinery of election is in the hands not simply of their opponents, but of unscrupulous partisans who stick at nothing to carry their ends. The greatest frauds with which they have to contend are found in the registration list, on which it is estimated there are at least 30,000 illegal names. What illegal registration would not do to carry elections has been done by fraudulent counting of ballots after election, an art in which Higgins, the Treasury Appointment Clerk, and Rasin, the Naval Officer of the port, are said to be special experts.

The Reform League has recently succeeded in securing the conviction of ten judges and clerks of election for frauds, but, curiously enough, could get no aid from the police on the trial. These judges are appointed by supervisors who are appointed by the Governor, and they are all of one party. Three grand juries in succession have declared that these supervisors have abused their trust or have been imposed on, but this has had no effect on the Governor, for he continues to select them from one party exclusively.

The organization in Baltimore which presides over the commission of election offences, and with which the reformers are now fighting a hard battle with a fair prospect of success, is, as is well known, patronized, if not directed by, Senator Gorman, who was Chairman of the Democratic Executive Committee in the last Presidential campaign, and through whose instrumentality Higgins was given employment in the Treasury and Rasin put into the Naval Office. Now, for some reason or other which nobody that we have heard of has ever been able to give, all attempts to bring home to the President's mind the exact nature and operation of Senator Gorman's machinery in Baltimore have proved ineffectual. The facts have been laid before him more than once by members of the Reform League, including Mr. Cowen, but without making any apparent impression. Higgins still holds his own, and so does Rasin, and so does Thomas, and so do others of the gang, who carry into their operations the authority and weight and immunity derived from the holding of Federal offices. Apparently the reformers have not been able to satisfy the President that the account Senator Gorman has probably given of them, that they are a small knot of cranks or malcontents, who are dissatisfied because they get none of the patronage themselves, is untrue. At all events, he pays no attention to their groans, and receives their remonstrances in more or less impressive silence.

The coming election, therefore, will not only be important for the influence it will have on the local government in Baltimore, but for the influence it will have on the President's mind touching Maryland politics. If the charges made by the Independent Democrats against the Gorman Machine are true, there is a state of things in that city which has probably had no parallel in an old Christian community since the Middle Ages. If it be a fact that "seven men have been appointed to office under city, State, and national governments within a few months, who have taken human life, and that these appointments have not been made by oversight, but in spite of all protest," and that Senator Gorman sees nothing wrong in such a state of things, and has persuaded the President that there is nothing wrong, we shall have to go back to the Merovingian period in France to find a match for Gorman as a Christian politician.

Should the reformers succeed in obtaining a fair vote and count, and should the election result in the defeat of the Gorman Machine, we trust it will be received at the White House as proof which cannot be gainsaid that the time has come to throw Gorman and his agents over-

board. We do not care what the nature of Gorman's hold on the Administration may be. We know nothing about it. We generally find that even the best informed treat it as a great and insoluble mystery. Some say it is a pledge which Gorman got during the campaign and from which the President cannot honorably depart. But even if it be a pledge, it is a pledge which can only be binding as long as Gorman can show successfully that his methods in Baltimore do not involve offences against social morality and the law of the land. President Cleveland would be the last man to acknowledge that any political promise could compel him to wink at or condone fraud or violence, or to reward men who, when accused of either, had no answer to make, except that their guilt was of long standing, and that their opponents were as bad as they. We take it for granted, therefore, that should the efforts of the good people in Baltimore, who are now trying to rescue their city from this great shame and sorrow, be crowned with success at the polls, President Cleveland will no longer hesitate; no matter at what cost, to rid his Administration of the great stain which Gorman has undoubtedly inflicted on it, and which every additional hour of Gorman deepens.

RELIGIOUS POLITICS.

THE proceedings of the American Board of Foreign Missions at Springfield during the past week have been very interesting and, in some respects, very instructive reading. The Board is a close corporation, that is, an incorporated body of 220 members, who fill their own vacancies, and administer an enormous revenue—about \$600,000 per annum—collected in the main from the Congregationalists, but to some extent from the Presbyterians, and used in support of missions to the heathen, chiefly in Africa and Asia. The active work of administration is done by the Secretary and the Prudential Committee, composed of ten members. About three years ago this Prudential Committee began to take the alarm about the "new theology" which seemed to be creeping into the Church from Andover and other places, and more particularly about the opinion that after death everybody will have a second chance of salvation, or, in other words, will pass through a period of probation in the next world before he is finally condemned or absolved. This opinion was thus described by the Rev. Dr. Walker in a speech at Springfield on Thursday:

"I sit at the feet of an eminent historical instructor, who can correct me if I am in error; but if I have read history aright, this conception of the possibility of divine grace extended in another world to men is as old as the second century of Christian history. It has been entertained by some of the noblest and saintliest fathers of the Christian Church. It pervades to a very great extent the views and conceptions of the noblest representatives of evangelical religion in England and in Germany to-day. It is set forth by men who have done more than any others to roll back the tide of German infidelity during the past thirty years—such names as Tholuck, Lange, and others whom I could name. This I say, then, is no novelty, and it is a simply misleading assertion which has been reiterated and sent broadcast on the wings of almost all our religious journals into the minds and hearts of the members of our churches, innocent as children upon this matter."

So much for its novelty. As to the extent to which it is held in the Congregational

churches, Mr. Mackenzie of Cambridge said, speaking on the same day:

"I am going back to my home to-morrow, and in a Sunday or two we are to take up a collection for this American Board. My people know that I am asking them to give their money to a society which, if I offered myself as a candidate, would spurn me from their doors. (Great applause. 'Hear! Hear!') But I am not a 'new-departure' man. I am not any departure man. I hold by the old Gospel and the whole of it. But these brethren of the Prudential Committee would not let me go, if I were young enough to go; they would not let my brother Gordon go. There is not a pastor in a church in old Boston to-day, with possibly one exception, who could go. I ask why the time has not come when we may say, what is good enough for the churches at home is good enough for the churches abroad, and when men shall be judged by their possession of the Gospel—its words and its spirit—and if they are found in an unselfish love willing to teach it, they shall be allowed to teach it."

In fact, all the available testimony seems to show that it is held by at least one-half the professing Christians who subscribe to the funds of the Board, and by all, or nearly all, the younger theologians, of whom Prof. George P. Fisher of Yale College may be considered a fair representative.

Now, the ten members of the Prudential Committee took it into their heads, about three years ago, that this opinion was erroneous; that they knew more about what was to happen to the souls of men hereafter than those who believe in the period of probation, and that they would not allow the doctrine to be communicated to the heathen to whom the Board sent missionaries. They therefore ceased to accept good and regular standing in an orthodox Congregational church as a qualification for missionary work. They made themselves a theological court, and examined the young men who asked for appointment as missionaries touching their views about probation. Any one who believed in probation they rejected, so that they established a state of things in which Prof. Fisher and at least half the Congregational ministers of the United States would be unfit for missionary work, however anxious to engage in it, and in which a heathen introduced into most of the American Congregational churches would hear things which he ought not to hear, and which would be injurious to his soul's health. When they were assailed in this position they fell back on the full Board, and the full Board has sustained them by a majority of 95 to 43.

The Board has filled thirteen vacancies with men who agree with the majority, and has rejected the claim of the probation party—or Progressives, as they call themselves—to any representation on the Board. No political caucus could have done this kind of work more neatly, or with bolder disregard of the wishes of dissentients. The members seem to have asked themselves what would be the use of being a close corporation, and filling their own vacancies, if they had to pay any attention to the protests of non-electors. How they come to know so much of the future life that they need not mind what any other Christian says about it, they have not explained, and yet there is no point in the controversy so important as this. A full revelation of the source of the Board's certainty would probably be an unspeakable gain to the religious world.

This revelation is especially important as touching the management of the missions,

because nothing but certain knowledge can excuse the Board for concealing from the heathen the fact that probation is believed in and expected by half at least of the Christians who send the missionaries to them. If the Board *knows* there will be no probation, it ought to justify itself before the world by telling how it knows it. If it does not know it, if its opinions about the matter are of precisely the same value, and no more, as the opinions of those who think there is probation, the concealment of this fact from the heathen is what is called in secular affairs a fraud, which is aggravated by the ignorance and simplicity of those on whom it is practised. That a missionary should, at the outset at least, make no mention to a heathen of the division of Christendom among various denominations is comprehensible and excusable, but that he should, by means of concealment, deceive the heathen as to the opinions held by the very body of Christians who send and pay him, on a point of vital importance to the heathen's spiritual welfare, is something which every system of morality would condemn in the severest terms. That professing Christians should fight stoutly for liberty to practise such a deception, while preaching the Gospel, is a marvellous illustration of the lengths to which pride of opinion, and especially theological opinion, will lead men. Any man who practised analogous deception about the views or interests of the promoters in putting a commercial company on the market, would in some countries go to jail, and in all incur the severest social reprobation. We trust nothing but the necessary restraints of discussion in a professedly religious meeting prevented the Progressives from characterizing the proposals of the Board in the terms which they deserved.

THE BRITISH MINISTRY.

THE British Ministry is apparently on the eve of another "crisis," owing to the failure of the Irish Coercion Bill. The great expectations entertained about the effect of the proclamation of the National League under the act have not been fulfilled. The meetings of the League continue to be held in the proclaimed districts in spite of the efforts of the police to prevent them, and in defiance of the penalty of six months' imprisonment which hangs over all who attend them. Worse still, reports of these proceedings continue to be published in all the newspapers, in defiance of a similar penalty. Wishing to make an example of one of the newspapers, the Government prosecuted Mr. Sullivan, the Lord Mayor of Dublin, for publishing one of these reports in his paper, the *Nation*; but the case broke down before the magistrate on the preliminary examination, for want of proof that the meeting reported was really a meeting of the National League. Then the prosecution of O'Brien for incendiary language hangs fire, for he has appealed, and, pending the appeal, makes more incendiary harangues than ever. Moreover, an attempt to put a Government reporter on the platform at a meeting at Mitchelstown ended in a riot, in which the police fired without orders and killed two unoffending men. Though last, not least, it appears that a moonlight outrage, ending in the murder of a constable, the news of