

MR. BLAINE AND THE ENGLISH CIVIL SERVICE.

MR. BLAINE talks so much, on all manner of subjects, that everybody who is condemned by the nature of his calling to read his speeches, perforce expects him every now and then to make a display of accurate knowledge about something. But nobody, we venture to say, has ever done so without being disappointed. We have never yet chanced to light on a speech or writing of his on any subject which he seemed to understand thoroughly, whether it be foreign politics or domestic law, political economy or agriculture. That he knows his weakness himself is evident from his vehemence and extravagance. When he is going full swing before a rural audience there is no limit to his audacity, and nobody knows the uses of audacity better.

The way he dealt with the English service the other day was a very good illustration of this. About the condition of the English civil service, of course, he knows nothing beyond the fact that admission to it is obtained in the main by competitive examination, and he hates competitive examination, and has been greatly bothered by it in his political career. He would long ago have attacked it publicly if he had not thought that it had in some inscrutable and disgusting way obtained a hold on popular favor. So he has waited patiently, sometimes in silence, though occasionally hinting that if the truth were known, or if he cared to speak out, he was himself the greatest and the only genuine civil-service reformer of them all.

Some relief, however, came to him the other day in the shape of a brief paragraph from the London correspondent of the *Tribune*, giving an account of the reasons for which a Commission of Inquiry into the condition of the civil service in England had been organized by the present Ministry. The paragraph said:

"Lord Randolph Churchill's Civil-Service Commission is reckoned a great coup for the Government and for himself. It means nothing less than a complete overhauling of the chief departments of state. In spite of civil-service reform their condition is believed to be worse than it was forty years ago. The cost of administration has enormously increased. It is doubtful whether the efficiency of the departments has not diminished. High salaries, short hours, excessive staffs, extravagant pensions, imperfect supervision over accounts, antiquated methods of business, and general incompetence and mismanagement—such are some of the charges now brought against the existing system. Lord Randolph Churchill aims at sweeping reforms, increased economy, increased efficiency. The only wonder is that Mr. Gladstone had not long since anticipated him. The proposal excites praise even from political opponents. The Commission is admittedly composed of strong and experienced members."

Now here Mr. Blaine thought he had found opportunity. Said he to himself, "This shows what competitive examinations, which we have copied from England, lead to. They are a failure even in England. I will restrain myself no longer. I will not pretend to be a reformer of any kind. I will denounce this thing from the stump and expose the humbugs who have so long plagued me." And he did it. He thought that if there was anything wrong with the civil service in England, it must be the mode of admission which caused it.

But now comes one of the leading assailants of the condition of the English civil service,

Mr. Benjamin Kidd, and tells the whole story in the last number of the *Nineteenth Century*. He gives a very bad account of its condition, but his complaints sound curiously in American ears, and they do not touch the principle of competitive examination at all. What he attacks is the scheme of 1875, which divided the service in the great public offices into a higher and lower division, with an impassable barrier between them, and each recruited by its own system of examination. The first division was intended to attract men of liberal education, received at the universities or great public schools, between the ages of eighteen and twenty-four. They are examined in the following subjects:

	Marks
English Composition (including Précis writing)	500
History of England (including that of the Laws and Constitution)	500
English Language and Literature	500
Language, Literature, and History of Greece	750
Language, Literature, and History of Rome	750
Language, Literature, and History of France	375
Language, Literature, and History of Germany	375
Language, Literature, and History of Italy	375
Mathematics (pure and mixed)	1,250
Natural Science; that is (1) Chemistry, including Heat; (2) Electricity and Magnetism; (3) Geology and Mineralogy; (4) Zoology; (5) Botany	1,000
The total (1,000) marks may be obtained by adequate proficiency in any two or more of the five branches of science included under this head.	
Moral Sciences; that is, Logic, Mental and Moral Philosophy	500
Jurisprudence	375
Political Economy	375

None of these is obligatory. A candidate can offer himself in as few or in as many as he pleases, and trust to his luck. But what a howl would be raised if the Civil Service Commission in this country proposed anything of similar severity. Well, Mr. Kidd's complaint is, that they are too severe, so severe that they do not attract the class of men for whom they were intended; that is, men competent to pass them successfully present-themselves only in very small numbers, as they think they can do better in other callings than the Government service. The practical result of this is, that the Government is obliged, in order to fill the vacancies in the upper division, to accept candidates who get very few marks—that is, pass very badly.

Mr. Kidd's second complaint is, that the examinations in the second or lower division are not severe enough. The subjects are as follows:

	Marks.
1. Handwriting	400
2. Orthography	400
3. Arithmetic	400
4. Copying MS. (to test accuracy)	200
5. English Composition	200
6. Geography	200
7. Indexing or Docketing	200
8. Digesting returns into summaries	200
9. English History	200
10. Book keeping	200

Lads trained in the elementary schools pass these examinations in great numbers, but they are not, he says, good enough for the Government service. There are seldom men of any attainments (except the "three R's") among them. Consequently, while the upper division is starved for want of good material, the lower one is stuffed with bad material, and there is no communication between them by way of promotion or transfer. This is the whole story. Of course, such a system is likely to result in a defective supply of men for the higher positions, such as are filled under our system by appointments confirmed by the Senate; and the want is felt through all

branches of the service, resulting in inefficient control and imperfect information about each other in the different branches. But no one in England proposes to remedy these evils by a return to the spoils system, or maintains that the working of the competitive system has been brought to perfection.

CHIEF ARTHUR AND MR. GEORGE.

MR. ARTHUR, the Chief of the Locomotive Brotherhood, has acquired the distinction which comes from always saying the right thing at the right time. At the meeting of the International Convention of the Brotherhood last week, he maintained his own high level. There were able and distinguished speakers there not belonging to Mr. Arthur's calling, men trained and practised in public debate. Yet Mr. Arthur's speech was much the most impressive of all that were made, not by reason of the position he holds, but by the plain truth and simplicity of what he said. It happens that another representative or spokesman of labor, and a very able man, too, is doing a great deal of talking to the people of New York at this time. The contrast between Mr. Arthur and Mr. George and their respective aims is very marked and radical.

That Mr. Arthur disapproves of the "Henry George movement," he had previously taken pains to make known, by saying that he disapproves of all steps to give a political turn to labor unions, since such steps lead to the arraying of class against class, and unsettling the foundations of the American idea of government. In his speech at the Convention he gave a very terse and pointed statement of the just relations subsisting between employers and employees in this country, from which we quote one pregnant paragraph:

"Neither the capitalist nor the laborer is wholly wrong. No one will justify oppressions complained of by candid and industrious workmen. The simple statement of their case will command public sympathy and approval. On the other hand, the public at large will promptly condemn the wilful destruction of property and the interruption of business. It is also prompt to disapprove of interference with private rights. *There is room enough for every man in a country like this, and every man disposed to work must be allowed to find the chance.* The workingman of to-day may be the capitalist of five or ten years from now. He is interested in the considerate and friendly adjustment of all industrial questions."

The theory of Mr. George is, that there is no room in this country, or indeed in the whole world, for anybody except landowners. This is the alpha and omega of his social philosophy. It results from this totally false conception of human interests that all classes should be arrayed against the land-owning class, to the end of dispossessing the latter of their holdings without making them any compensation whatever. It is nothing to him that the land-owner may have invested the earnings of a lifetime's toil at the loom or the anvil in order to buy a farm or get a few acres of ground or a city lot as a security and shelter for his old age. If he is a land-owner he belongs to the hated class against whom all other classes should array themselves. It is nothing to him that the American farmer is the most hardworking of all our workers, and that in the last analysis every other class of workers depends upon his success and could not live a year if he should stop working. He is a land-

owner and therefore a proper subject for spoliation. It is nothing to him that the life of the pioneer and the homesteader is one of suffering and privation scarcely conceivable even in a New York tenement-house. Eventually the pioneer and homesteader becomes a land-owner. Eventually his land yields rent or has rental value. This, according to the George philosophy, should be summarily confiscated, and the demand of the homesteader for compensation should be met by saying, "Sir, you robbed me yesterday and the day before and the day before that. Why should I allow you to rob me to-day and to-morrow also? Your rental value is sending children to early graves, and young girls to brothels, and grown men to grog-shops and prisons, and the human race to perdition. We will not trouble ourselves about your compensation any more than we troubled ourselves about compensating the slave-owners for the loss of their so-called property."

Mr. George does not employ concrete examples of this type to illustrate his principles. He prefers rather the grasping railway corporation, with its land grant, the foreign lord who buys out the homesteader after he has subdued his land and perfected his title, the dweller in cities who derives an income from rents of land either rural or urban—anything for illustration except the hardworking farmer or the pioneer facing a winter in Dakota, with no food but frozen potatoes, and no fuel but twisted hay. But he includes them by the necessity of his iron-bound doctrine. Rental value is rental value, whether the possessor is poor or rich, useful or useless, good, bad, or indifferent. His scheme admits no exceptions. The admission of exceptions would scatter it in ruins.

Now, there is not the slightest danger that Mr. George's land doctrines will make any headway in this country. It is only the tendency of them that calls for examination at this time. Mr. Hewitt was perfectly right in saying that this tendency is towards class distinctions. The Henry George movement has acquired such force as it possesses solely because Mr. George's writings tend to draw a deep line between the land-owning class and all other classes. The picture he draws is that of a particular portion of the community rolling in wealth at the expense of the laboring masses. This has captivated the eye of a large number of voters who make no distinctions between sources of wealth, and to whom Mr. George's notions respecting rent and interest are as unintelligible as Sanskrit, and who, in fact, care nothing about those things. To them Mr. George represents only the so-called "conflict between capital and labor," which Mr. Arthur rightly says does not exist, but is only a misnomer for the conflict between thrift and idleness.

THE CZAR AND HIS PEOPLE.

CZAR ALEXANDER III. is at this moment the man in Europe whose disposition, temper, and intentions are most speculated about. His shadowy movements and violent expressions of an autocratic will are scrutinized with more eager curiosity even than the doings and utterances of Prince Bismarck, who is uni-

versally looked upon as the arbiter of the destinies of the Continent. The German Chancellor is felt to be in an expectant mood, and firmly bent on keeping his purposes, in the present complicated state of European affairs, undisclosed, while the Czar is irritated to a degree of passion which betrays him to the eye of the world. His excited temper, which menaces the peace of Europe, is attributed to a morbid condition brought about by constant exasperation and the never-slumbering fear of assassins. Stories are told of murders committed by his guardians and by his own hands upon persons innocently approaching him. Hereditary insanity is supposed by some to be at the bottom of his strange dealings with Bulgaria, for his great-grandfather, the Emperor Paul, was strangled as a madman, and his grand-uncle, the Grand Duke Constantine, was deemed more or less insane when the crown which belonged to him on the demise of Alexander I. was taken, not without his consent, by his younger brother Nicholas.

All these speculations, however, are of only secondary interest in the light of Russian history, profoundly examined. Russian autocrats are in reality autocrats only in name. The Czar's power is a "despotism tempered by assassination" and also by the will of a controlling portion of the people. Such it has been at least since the death of Peter the Great. It is the Czar's surroundings, supported or swayed by the higher ranks in the army, or a strong popular current, that in the long run shape the policy of the Empire. The wars of Alexander I., of Nicholas, of Alexander II., were wars of the nation just as much as were those of parliamentary England under the lead of Pitt, of Castlereagh, or of Beaconsfield. It was the ambition of generals and the fanaticism of the people (in a limited sense) that decided the powerful attacks on the Ottoman Empire in 1828, in 1853, and in 1877. Russia has had no conqueror, no warlike monarch, on the throne during the present century, but the Russians are a conquering nation. Alexander I. was peace-loving, Nicholas a domestic tyrant, content with his vast dominions and indirect dictation abroad; Alexander II., a good-natured and timid ruler. But not one of them was strong enough to resist a war pressure emanating from the restlessness of the army and the people. Enough is known of Alexander III. to warrant the assertion that he is neither bellicose nor greedy of conquest; that he would like to live in peace if he could; that he is not inclined to risk defeat and bankruptcy for the slender chance of one day entering Constantinople in triumph. Nor are his nearest advisers, De Giers, Tolstoj, and Pobiedonostzeff, men of fighting propensities. But he is pushed along by an irresistible warlike and expansive current formed by the desire of his army officers for promotion, emoluments, and distinction, and by the fanaticism of Slavophiles, Panslavists, and revolutionary world-regenerators. His own passion is, in the main, a reflex one.

Ambition and the love of public activity find in Russia only one honorable field; that of war. Domestic activity is servitude under most degrading conditions. The highest offi-

cial in the civil service are mere tools. There is no parliamentary arena, no room for manly leadership through the press or the rostrum. Independence of view in the field of literature frequently leads to martyrdom in Siberia, insanity, or premature death in one form or other. Russian literary biography is full of evidences of this monstrous fatality. Honors, popularity, and real eminence, however, lie in the path of the brave soldier. The acts of the hero, of the commander, are his own; he is rewarded as a leader, not as a servile instrument. And Russia is not a decrepit country: myriads of heroes long for action, for fame, for manly excitement. Some look for gratification in the ranks of the army, others in those of conspiring fraternities, others enter the lists of masked journalism; all make for change, for expansion, for war. The followers of such loyal Slavophiles as Aksakoff and Katakoff, the turbulent Panslavists of the school of Fadeyeff and Tcherniayeff, the would-be Skobelevs and Gurkos, all meet on the same ground of aggressive hostility to the Turk, the Magyar, and the Austrian. The Nihilists help along in order to plunge the hated Government into perilous enterprises which might lead to a Russian Sedan, a republican overthrow, and a Moscow Commune. The Russian Government is at this moment, as it was in 1877, both honestly and treacherously goaded into war. Not a voice in the press is raised for peace, for the rights of Bulgaria, for moderation or caution. The heads of the army are anxious to fight. The Czar is maddened by the clamor. The more prudent counsellors must veil their advice. Fear of Germany alone keeps the sword in the scabbard—that is, keeps Alexander III. from speaking the fatal word of command. When France is ready to join in action, that word may be spoken—not because the Czar wills it from pride or madness, but because his nation's patriotism and chauvinism demand it.

THE LATEST ENGLISH MESSIAH.

MARLESFORD, ENG., September 30, 1886.

ON Saturday, the 18th instant, died, near Lymington, a woman who, as the foundress of a crazy superstition, reminds one immediately of Anne Lee. Like that fanatic, though probably without conscious imitation, she gave out that she was the second Christ, and, like her, announced that she should never die. Of both, likewise, the sectators, in consequence of the boisterous and gymnastic character of what passed (with them) for devotional exercises, acquired the designation of Shakers.

Mary Ann Girling was the eldest of the fourteen children of William Clouting, by his wife Emma, whose maiden surname was Gibbs; both of them belonging to the agricultural laboring class. Her birthplace was Tinker Brook, a hamlet of Little Glemham, about four miles from Wickham Market, in East Suffolk. The house in which she first saw the light was torn down a few years ago.

Her schooling was of the scantiest. In her girlhood, besides being an intrepid hoyden, she made herself somewhat notorious by her lawless freedom with young men. For several years, later on, she earned her living as a domestic servant in various places; and she also found employment as a dressmaker. In due course she married a man of the name of George Girling, a