

A SINGLE FIASCO.

The Irish question threatens to be the rock upon which the Gladstonian ministry in Great Britain shall again split. The premier's majority is only slender at best, and its component parts are so diverse and dissimilar upon the leading issues that are likely to come before parliament that his hold upon the office has all along seemed in the highest degree precarious. The outline of the Irish home rule bill, which after much consideration and hesitating preparation is at last informally divulged, gives small hope that it is destined to be adopted. A summary of the proposed measure shows it to possess the following features:

First—Reserving to parliament the sole right of legislation in reference to the land question for a limited time.

Second—As to the retention of Irish members at Westminster, it will probably adopt Mr. Parnell's suggestion to first settle the question of the veto to be placed upon the lord lieutenant.

Third—Appointed judges will be retained by the government for the fixed term of five years.

Fourth—The same term will be fixed for the complete transformation of the police into a civil body.

Fifth—Ireland will have no power to impose protective duties.

It seems almost amusing that so much time and study should have been devoted to a matter that promises no better solution of the great difficulty than this. On the one hand it will appear to many Englishmen that the bill promises a great deal to Ireland, while to many Irishmen it will come far short of that which even moderate home-rulers thought they had a right to expect. In a word, it lacks the boldness that would commend it to the advanced thinkers on either side of St. George's channel, and as a half-way, tinkering sort of measure that arouses enthusiasm in no quarters it bears evidence of having been born only to go down to early death.

THE SENATORIAL SITUATION.

One of the senatorial contests to which the eyes of the whole country have been turned for several weeks past was settled yesterday, California being the state and Stephen M. White of Los Angeles the successful man. The result was accomplished as soon as attempted, contrary to the expectations of nearly everybody that knew anything about the situation, and with no other disorder than a charge of bribery by one member of the legislature and the retort violent immediately following it. There are forty senators and eighty representatives in the California legislature and it therefore required sixty-one votes to elect on joint ballot; the Democrats had fifty-nine, the Republicans fifty-two, the Populists eight and there was one independent, who, with one of the Populists, voted for White, giving him the necessary number and a majority absent.

Mr. White is a Democrat of the most pronounced character and a man of great ability. He is a native Californian, we believe, and is therefore many removes from an old man.

He is a lawyer by profession and is moderately wealthy. His election narrows the small gap between the Democratic and Republican strength in the United States Senate by six votes, three being taken from the majority and given to the minority, the other two coming from New York and Wisconsin. In the former Edward Murphy, Jr., has been chosen, but there has been no choice yet in the other, although it is as good as settled, the only question being as to what Democrat it will be, that party having a decided majority in the legislature.

The Senate stands up to date—Republicans forty-four, Democrats forty-three, Populists one. In this statement, Kyle of South Dakota, elected as an independent is classed with the Democrats because he has so far acted with them and has lately in formal terms announced his intention of continuing to do so; and Stewart of Nevada is put down as a Republican although elected as a Populist, for the reason that he is a Republican of pronounced proclivities and on a vote as between the two great parties would be most likely to act with the one to which he has been attached during the whole of his political career.

The Democrats have now to elect but one more senator to be in absolute control of every branch of the government after the fourth of next March; they would then have forty-four or just half, which, with the casting vote of Vice-President Stevenson, would be sufficient for all practical purposes. However, Peffer of Kansas, the one Populist, will vote with them on all such questions as tariff reduction, as probably any other in his class who may yet be chosen would; so that, we may say, on the greatest issues before the people the administration will be strictly Democratic anyway.

THE WORLD'S AGE.

When the scientific geologist has nothing else to look after or when, like ex-Senator Ingalls, he is out of a job, he oftener than otherwise turns his attention to figuring out the age of the world. Considering the fact that we are also well acquainted with the subject of speculation, by reason of close and unyielding association, it seems at a glance as though we ought all to know something regarding the length of time since it was fashioned and set on its triumphal march about the blazing zone, but we don't; as a matter of fact worldly wisdom in this instance consists of a mass of theories interwoven with a network of conjectures, out of which a product is evolved and paraded before the intellectual public as a "conclusion," the author of which is not always as wise as the reader.

We are now advised by a savant that the amount of lime salts in water which comes as drainage from districts made up of granites and basalts is found by a comparison of different analyses to be on an average of 3.73 parts in 100,000 parts of water. Those who adopt this mode of reckoning assume that "the excess areas of igneous rocks, taken on an average throughout all geological time, will bear to the

exposures of sedimentary rocks a ratio of one to nine, and from these and other abstruse data it is inferred that the elimination of the calcareous matter now found in all the sedimentary strata" must have been going on for a period of 600,000,000 years! There will be a few if not a good many to whom the quoted passage will be about equivalent to so much Sanscrit, since every one has not a scientific bent of mind; but most of us can gather in the conclusion and hold fast thereto with but little trouble.

It is said that even numbers are usually a just object of suspicion, and in this case they are especially so. If the philosopher, savant, or whatever else he may be had inserted a fraction somewhere amidst that long chain of ciphers, or had broken up its freight-train appearance by the introduction of one or more of the other numerals, it would "go down" somewhat easier; and it would have been no harder to do this, either, since it could have been as well arranged as the existing result by the same process of thought and reasoning. For instance, he might have shown that the calcareous sediment of the silurian strata and the poecilitic systems undergo a deteriorating abrasion of 000.1 corresponding with a cycle of 642 years, and this subjected to the maxima of deterioration precipitated by the concatenation of hydrostatic and hydro-carbonic pressure exhibit a remainder of 7,061 per cent, thus making up the sum total of the earth's existence 651,294,362½ years. If any reader is disposed to doubt that our system is less scientific and methodical than the other, it is a safe guarantee that none of them will question that the result last arrived at is as correct as the preceding one; at least he (or she) will be unable to show that it isn't.

A HOHENZOLLERN SCHOOL-BOY.

The heir-apparent to the Imperial throne of Germany and the royal throne of Prussia is an eleven-year-old lad who has just entered the public school at Kiel. There is a flavor of democracy about this proceeding that one would hardly expect from so autocratic and austere a ruler as the young crown prince's father during his short reign has shown himself to be. Yet in causing his son to participate in the daily exercises imposed upon all the children in his realm and in insisting that he mingle in childish sports and studies with those whom he expects to rule, Kaiser William has but done with his heir that which his father Frederick William did with him. The present emperor was the first of his race to seek knowledge at the common feunt provided for the humblest German child. His tutor suggested that the future sovereign should not be denied the benefits of intimate contact with those who were to be his future subjects. Iron old William I opposed the innovation as subversive of precedent and in violation of all Hohenzollern notions of court procedure. But the then crown prince, progressive, amiable Frederick, and his wife, the English princess, seconded the tutor's demand, and the innovation was made.