

The Language Question in Malta.

1901.

(Cuttings from the English Press.)

LANGUAGE DIFFICULTY IN MALTA.

"Morning Post" 2nd Aug. 1901.

Further correspondence relating to the political condition of Malta was published yesterday in the form of a Blue-book extending to a hundred and eighty pages. It covers a period ranging from May 28, 1898, to the 30th of last month. The closing despatch from Mr. Chamberlain to the Acting Governor, Lord Congleton, conveys the decision of his Majesty's Government on the questions of the official language and the passing of the votes necessary to carry on the administration. In this despatch, which practically deals with and disposes of the principal matter covered in the foregoing correspondence, Mr. Chamberlain states that the difficulties encountered in the administration of the government of the island are due to the attitude of the elected members with regard to the language question. In February, 1898, Colonel J. L. Hewson, an officer in the Army Pay Department at Malta, was committed by a Maltese court of law for contempt of court, because he refused to sign a deposition in a language with which he was entirely unacquainted. Legislative action was accordingly taken by an Order in Council of March 7, 1899, for the purpose of removing the injustice of a British subject unfamiliar with the Italian language being tried by a court in a British Colony in a language which he could not understand, and of affording him certain facilities for the conduct of civil proceedings in the English language.

ENGLISH AND ITALIAN.

Mr. Chamberlain explains that the effect of the Order in Council is not to prevent Italian being used in the courts, but simply to provide that where a British subject, not born or naturalised in Malta is concerned, he shall possess the right to have the proceedings conducted in English—a provision which the Colonial Secretary considers to be in accordance with the principles of commonsense and justice, and which cannot furnish any ground for a grievance on the part of the Maltese.

This, however, is only one point in connection with the language question. Till recently the children in the elementary schools of Malta were taught at the same time English and Italian, as well as the native Maltese language, but as a rule they were not kept at school long enough to learn even the elements of either the English or the Italian sufficiently for any practical purpose. New regulations were passed providing that children were to be taught Maltese only, and other subjects through the medium of Maltese, for the first two years, and that at the end of that period parents were to choose between English and Italian as the other language to be taught through the medium of the Maltese language. Mr. Chamberlain goes on to say: "The educational returns show that parents in Malta and Gozo have by an overwhelming majority elected for their instruction in the English language, and this decision has been arrived at in spite of every kind of influence and pressure brought to bear on them by the limited class who are interested in maintaining a privileged position for the Italian language in the islands." In view of these facts his Majesty's Government arrived at the conclusion that the time was not far distant when the English language should be definitely adopted as the language of the courts in Malta, and the period of fifteen years from March 22, 1899, was fixed in order that those whose interests might be affected might know that the change was impending and might have ample time to prepare for it. Attempts, however, have been made by Dr. Mizzi, one of the elected members of the council, and others to prejudice the matter by representing that the action which is being taken is preparatory to an influx of British competition. In consequence of these and other unfounded statements a proclamation was issued by the Governor for the purpose of allaying the panic which had resulted in the sudden withdrawal of children from the schools, and of assuring residents that the Government had never entertained the intentions which had been imputed to them.

ADDITIONAL TAXATION.

Having failed in their efforts to force the Italian language on the majority, the oppo-

nents of free choice next announced as their policy the refusal of all taxation and public improvements till they had secured their ends. To meet this contingency the Government advised his Majesty to pass by Order in Council the legislation required for dealing with a portion, at any rate, of the various outstanding questions. After consultation with Sir F. W. Grenfell, Mr. Chamberlain says he has come to the conclusion that the following sums are required to carry out the works: Construction of new schools, £35,000; extension of drainage works, £300,000; extension of water works, £20,000; construction of new wards in hospital, £5,000; construction of leper asylum for women, £8,000; construction of a ward for criminal lunatics, £2,500; and the reconstruction and improvement of roads, streets and open spaces, £10,000; making a total of £380,500. In view of the opposition of the council the Colonial Secretary states: "It is necessary to have recourse to additional taxation. It is proposed, therefore, to spread the expenditure over a period of thirteen years; the annual amount to be raised for these services will be about £29,000, to which must be added the additional sum of £9,000, which is to be provided every year for civil contingencies." A scheme of taxation for raising the additional amount of £38,000 has been prepared, and provision is made in the Order in Council for the creation of a new appointment of Assistant Crown Advocate, who will undertake such duties as the Governor may assign to him.

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"THE STANDARD" 2nd AUG. 1901.

The Blue-book, published yesterday, containing the latest Correspondence on the Maltese question ought to be read by everyone who wishes to realise the irritating character of the problems which a Colonial Secretary may be called upon to solve. It is something lengthy, and contains, as is but natural, a good deal of repetition, together with some amusing examples of Maltese reasoning and eloquence. But a sufficient idea of the merits of the dispute may be gathered from two of the documents it comprises. The first is the statement of the claims and grievances of the Maltese, and the second is the final Despatch of Mr. Chamberlain announcing the decision of His Majesty's Government. The substance of the story is capable of being stated in few words. There is a patriotic Party in Malta which absurdly claims a national existence for the Maltese, and is in sympathy if not in correspondence, with the advocates of the *Italia Irredenta* on the mainland. These politicians are discontented with the large measure of Self-government secured to them

by the Constitution of 1887, and indulge in a good deal of rhetoric about the exasperating character of the English tyranny by which they are pleased to say they are oppressed. They have found an excuse for agitation in the resolution of the British Government to enforce the use of English as the language of the Law Courts at a date fixed at fifteen years after March, 1899. Italian is not the native tongue of the Maltese, who speak a curious dialect of their own, mainly Arabic. But for commercial purposes it has been used for centuries, and for some time in the Law Courts. In 1898 Colonel I. L. Hewson, who had refused to sign an Italian deposition on the ground that he could not understand a word of it, was committed for contempt of Court. This incident called attention to the absurdity of a state of things which subjected a British officer to such an indignity in a British Possession. It was decided to do what any other Power would have enforced long ago—namely, to establish English as the legal language. The Government, however, showed full consideration to those who would suffer by a sudden change, and for the feelings of the Maltese. As Italian is taught in the schools, it was easy to find out their sentiments. Parents were asked whether they preferred that their children should learn Italian or English. An overwhelming majority decided for the latter, and it was not until they had done so that the resolution to displace Italian after a time was taken. If the majority of the Maltese had been allowed to act as they wished, no trouble would have arisen. Unfortunately, with the usual apathy of the Southern nations, they allow themselves to be represented in the Legislative Council by a small body of pushing politicians who have made the use of Italian a pretext for agitation. Taking advantage of the Institutions which they owe to this country, they have refused to vote money for the most necessary works. Dr. Mizzi was sent here on a mission to Mr. Chamberlain, whom he describes as looking stern, but as courteous and attentive. The Doctor's arguments were listened to, but produced no effect. In the Island his friends advocated their cause by spreading stories that English was to be introduced because the boys were to be taken in South Africa and the girls to wash for the British Army. It became at last necessary to put a stop to the Obstruction. His Majesty's Government have at last decided to take advantage of the right reserved to legislate for the Island by Order in Council, and the money needed for public works will be raised by taxes, which will still leave the Maltese far less heavily burdened than the Italians; though wages are higher in the Island than in Italy.

THE LANGUAGE QUESTION AT MALTA.

DESPATCH FROM MR. CHAMBERLAIN.

“ST. JAMES GAZETTE” 2nd AUG. 1901.

Mr. Chamberlain has dealt firmly with the opposition of the elected members of the Maltese Council to the policy of the Government on the language question. These representatives resisted the right to English being used in the courts where Englishmen were concerned, and their resistance being overruled, prevented the necessary measures of sanitation, the building of schools, and other public works. The Colonial Secretary has consequently, by an Order in Council, sanctioned these works and the expenditure—£38,000—which they will entail. In his despatch, dated July 30, 1901, Mr. Chamberlain reminds the Acting Governor, Lord Congleton, that the educational returns show that—

The people of Malta and Gozo, having the choice before them whether their children should be instructed in English or in Italian, have by an overwhelming majority elected for their instruction in English language, and that this decision has been arrived at by the people in spite of every kind of influence and pressure which has been brought to bear upon them by the limited class who are interested in maintaining a privileged position for the Italian language in the Islands.

The opponents of free choice for the people of Malta, having failed in their efforts to force the Italian language on a majority which has conclusively shown that it prefers English, have now openly announced as their policy the refusal of all taxation and public improvements, even those most necessary to the health and comfort of the poor, until they can secure their ends. It has, therefore, become imperative to consider how this policy should be met.

The abuse of constitutional powers would justify the amendment of the Constitution, but his Majesty's Government are loth to take this course, and prefer to adopt a temporary alternative, hoping that reflection and common sense may before long induce the elected members to adopt a wiser and more patriotic policy. You are aware that when the Constitution was granted in 1849, and again when it was extended in 1887, provision was made, in view of the great Imperial interests connected with the fortress of Malta, for legislating by Order in Council in any cases in which those interests demanded it, and the Council of Government was unwilling to

fulfil its duties. His Majesty's Government are of opinion that this contingency has once more arisen, and they have, therefore, decided to advise his Majesty to pass by Order in Council the legislation required for dealing with a portion, at any rate, of the various outstanding questions.”

Mr. Chamberlain adds:—

“It is not the policy of His Majesty's Government to force either the English or the Italian language upon the people of Malta, but to leave the matter entirely to their own free choice. This policy has already been carried out in the case of the Elementary schools, and, with a view to applying it to the whole educational system of the Island, it is proposed to advise His Majesty to make such provision by the Order in Council as will enable the parents of students in the Lyceum and University to exercise the same opinion with regard to the choice of English or Italian as they are already in a position to do in the Elementary schools, subject, however, to the following exception. With a view to removing all possible ground for the imputation that the action of the Government upon the language question is due to religious motives, it has been decided to make no change with regard to the medium of instruction in the case of the Faculty of Theology and to a special provision in the Order in Council that the instruction shall continue to be given in the Latin or Italian language. I should add that the obstacle in the way of teaching the children in the Elementary schools both English and Italian at the same time does not exist in the case of the advanced students at the Lyceum or the University, and that it will, of course, be open to them to elect to learn both languages if they wish to do so.

MR. CHAMBERLAIN AND THE MALTESE.

“THE DAILY TELEGRAPH” 2ND AUG. 1901.

Mr. Chamberlain has dealt firmly and decisively with the factious opposition of the elected members of the Maltese Council to the policy of the Government on the language question. These representatives resisted the right to English being used in the courts where Englishmen were concerned, and their resistance being overruled prevented necessary measures of sanitation, the building of schools and other public works. The Colonial Secretary has consequently, by an Order in Council, sanctioned these works and the expenditure—£38,000—which they will entail. In his despatch, dated July 30, 1901, Mr.

Chamberlain reminds the Acting-Governor, Lord Congleton, that the educational returns show that "the people of Malta and Gozo, having the choice before them whether their children should be instructed in English or in Italian, have by an overwhelming majority elected for their instruction in the English language, and this decision has been arrived at by the people in spite of every kind of influence and pressure which has been brought to bear upon them by the limited class who are interested in maintaining a privileged position for the Italian language in the Islands." He adds: "The opponents of free choice for the people of Malta having failed in their efforts to force the Italian language on a majority which has conclusively shown that it prefers English, have now openly announced as their policy the refusal of all taxation and public improvements, even those most necessary to the health and comfort of the poor, until they can secure their ends." He therefore meets this contumacy with the drastic order just cited. With regard to the money question, Mr. Chamberlain observes that in Malta wages have continually risen until they are now from 2s. to 3s. a day, and of a skilled labourer 3s. 4d. to 6s. 8d. per day; while in Sicily the corresponding rates are barely, if at all, more than half these sums. Taxation in Italy averaged £2 14s. 3d. and in Malta £1 3s. 2d. It appears abundantly that the elected members represent a small minority of the Maltese population.

"THE EVENING STANDARD," 2ND AUG. 1901.

A Blue-book has been issued to remind us that there is a Maltese Question. It is, of course, the old story about the preservation of language and nationality, but one of the most hollow and artificial descriptions that could well be concocted for political purposes. The language that a handful of pushing Maltese legislators wish to preserve is not their own half-breed Arabic dialect, but Italian, which has been used commercially for a long time, and is also in use at the Law Courts. Nobody really wants to preserve Italian as the official language. A census of opinion on the subject was taken some time ago, and a vast majority of parents decided in favour of their children being taught English, instead of Italian in the schools. The Maltese question is simply a manufactured grievance run by political agitators to justify their own existence and create as much fuss as possible.

A LESSON FROM MALTA.

ANOTHER LANGUAGE QUESTION.

"THE DAILY CHRONICLE," 2ND AUG. 1901.

To those who believe that to multiply dialects is not necessarily to diminish friction and who would therefore prefer to see English alone established as the official language of South Africa, the Blue-book on the political condition of Malta, issued by the Colonial Office last Thursday, is full of suggestion. In Malta as in Cape Colony, we have gone out of our way to encourage an alien tongue at the expense of our own, and in each case the result of our action has been to create trouble and embarrassment for our Governors and their agents. For over thirty years the language question in Malta, directly or indirectly has acutely handicapped the work of administration.

Italian has no logical standing in Malta whatever. It is no language of the natives, who speak an incurable vernacular akin to Arabic, and it is not the language of the Empire. It was only introduced into the colony about a hundred years ago by some Italian emigrants from the mainland, and within that time it has made so little headway that to-day less than four per cent. of the natives are able to converse in it. For the past twenty years all the education in Malta that has amounted to anything has been in English. The statistics of the last three years show that 98 per cent. of the people voluntarily choose to have their children educated in our own tongue. Nevertheless, Italian has long enjoyed a privileged position. It was for years the exclusive language of the law courts: it is at this moment optional in the Council, and attempts have been made to establish it as the sole medium of education. These attempts have not proceeded solely from the Italian lawyers and politicians of the Island. Sir Penrose Julyan, reviewing the whole question in the seventies, wrote that "a great error was committed by the late Sir George Cornwall Lewis when he recommended that preference should be given to Italian over English in the educational and other establishments of the colony." There is no need to speculate on the motives that urged Sir George Lewis to this recommendation. He has himself set them down in black and white. "From its use as the language of trade throughout the Mediterranean," he wrote, "and from the near neighbourhood of Malta to Italy and Sicily, the Italian language is far more useful to a Maltese than any other language except his own." So far as trade goes,

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the event has ludicrously disproved Sir George's expectations; but the most remarkable part of his argument is what it does not contain. The notion that a British statesman could be profitably employed in pushing the English language, that he owed any debt, whether political or sentimental, to his mother tongue never seems to have occurred to him.

Had Sir George Lewis's policy been carried out uninterruptedly we might to-day be ruling in Malta an Italian speaking community taking its political orders from Rome and thoroughly out of harmony with its English governors. Fortunately common sense, however haltingly, intervened. Italian was dispossessed and English bracketed with it as an obligatory language in the schools; and under this absurd system, which forced the Maltese children to learn three tongues—English, Italian, and the native dialect—the schools were administered up to four or five years ago. Then the obvious fact was discovered that the strain on the infant mind was too great, and that the Maltese were growing up impartially ignorant of either English or Italian. It was therefore determined to teach Maltese only in the elementary schools, and after that to allow the parents to choose between Italian and English in the higher grades. In spite of the noisy pressure of the Italian clique, the inhabitants have given a virtually unanimous preference to English, the statistics showing that in 1900 99.4 per cent. in Malta and 97.4 per cent. in Gozo were in favour of their children learning English rather than Italian. Considering the Maltese derive practically all their wealth by catering for the English soldiers and sailors, and that the Italians in the Island are largely a non-productive class, lawyers and professional men, there is nothing to be surprised at in the statistics.

Ousted from their control of the schools, the Italian clique still kept its hold on the law courts, with the amazing consequence that in a British colony a British subject, up to March 22, 1899, was tried in Italian, his evidence was translated into Italian, his lawyer pleaded in Italian, and the verdict for or against him was delivered in Italian. Taking advantage of the committal for contempt of Court of an English Colonel who declined to sign a deposition in a language of which he knew nothing, the Home Government determined to put an end to the system under which such an anomaly was possible. The local Council refusing to act, an Order in Council was enacted in March 1899, making English optional at once in all the proceedings of the Maltese Courts, and providing for the total supersession of Italian at an end of fifteen years. The necessity for this action

is emphasised by the consideration that while there are in Malta 180,000 natives and 25,000 Englishmen, the number of Italians and of Italian-speaking Maltese is less than 5,000. Our national good nature never surely went further than in permitting 5,000 Italians to dictate to over 200,000 British subjects the language in which the law should be administered.

Malta is governed through a Council, the members of which are partly nominated and partly elected. Law and politics go hand in hand in Malta as completely as in the United States, and the Italian lawyers have had little difficulty in getting themselves chosen as "the representatives of the people." There they have formed a violent party of opposition from the moment the first step was taken towards reducing Italian to its proper position. They have treated every question as being inseparably connected with the language issue. They have refused to vote money for new schools, or for the teachers' salaries; they have systematically blocked every proposal of whatever scope and character, in the hope of worrying the Government into submission. Drainage works, water works, hospitals, asylums, street improvements, much-needed harbours and jetties have all been "held up" by the obstructive tactics of the Italian agitators, who are fighting openly and cynically for their own interests, who care nothing about the Maltese or the Empire, and are only concerned in seeing that the privileges that should never have been granted are preserved intact. Nor has the mischief been confined to the Council. They have deliberately attempted to foster disaffection among the natives by insinuating that the educational reforms were merely the prelude to an attack on the native religion, that we want the Maltese to learn English in order to use them as soldiers, and that the island, not being yet endowed with all the paraphernalia of democratic government, is really in "a state of slavery." They have also endeavoured, not without success, to create strife and resentment between England and Italy, by enlisting the Italian Press on behalf of what they pretend to be a national cause. Fortunately their power for injury is limited by the Constitution, a clause of which provides that where the local Council is unwilling to act, legislation may be enacted by Order in Council. In his dispatch of July 30, 1901, the Colonial Secretary enumerates no less than eleven undertakings, most of them of an educational, sanitary, or charitable character, and none of them in the least connected with the language issue which the Italian agitators have refused to ratify, and which have accordingly to be proceeded with, if at all, by virtue of an Order in Council.

At one of the most vital spots in the Empire an interloping clique of foreigners, trading on the privileges granted them in a moment of happy-go-lucky sentimentalism, have set themselves, as a matter of policy, to thwart Imperial interest by every means in their power.

Eventually, no doubt, the agitation will die away, and the next generation of Italians in Malta will think it no great hardship that English should be the official tongue in the law court of an English possession. But when one sees how much confusion and how much ill-feeling have been provoked by the rectification of the initial blunder of permitting and encouraging a competition of language in Malta, one may well plead for a patient all round consideration before South Africa is launched on a similar course. In this matter it is the first step which costs. There are villages in Wisconsin and other Western States where the native Americans are hopelessly outnumbered by the foreign immigrants. Yet the education in these villages is in English, and English is the only language allowed in the law courts and the local assemblies, and yet no one thinks it a hardship. Had it been understood from the start that so long as Malta was in English hands, English was to be the official language of the colony, the Italian immigrants would have accommodated themselves to the decree without a murmur. There is one other lesson: that is, that it is much better and easier to start sensibly at once than to be obliged afterwards to retrace one's steps.

THE POLITICAL SITUATION IN MALTA.

DESPATCH FROM MR. CHAMBERLAIN.

"EVENING STANDARD," 2ND AUG. 1901.

Further correspondence relating to the political condition of Malta was last night issued in the form of a Blue-book. It extends over the period from May, 1898, and closes with a Despatch, dated July 30, from Mr. Chamberlain to the Acting Governor, Lord Congleton. In this the Colonial Secretary conveys the decision of the King's Government on the questions of the official language and the passing of the votes necessary to carry on the Administration. After stating that Sir F. Grenfell has been instructed to give the most ample assurances that his Majesty's Government do not entertain, and never have entertained, the intentions imputed to them by ignorant or interested opponents of their policy, Mr. Chamberlain proceeds:

"The opponents of free choice for the people of Malta having failed in their efforts to force the Italian language on a majority which has conclusively shown that it prefers English, have now openly announced as their policy the refusal of all taxation and public improvements, even those most necessary to the health and comfort of the poor, until they can secure their ends. It has, therefore, become imperative to consider how this policy should be met. The abuse of Constitutional powers would justify the amendment of the Constitution: but his Majesty's Government are loth to take this course, and prefer to adopt a temporary alternative, hoping that reflection and commonsense may before long induce the elected members to adopt a wiser and more patriotic policy. You are aware that when the Constitution was granted in 1849, and again when it was extended in 1887, provision was made, in view of the great imperial interests connected with the fortress of Malta, for legislating by Order in Council in any cases in which those interests demanded it, and the Council of Government was unwilling to fulfil its duties. His Majesty's Government are of opinion that this contingency has once more arisen, and they have, therefore, decided to advise his Majesty to pass by Order in Council the legislation required for dealing with a portion, at any rate, of the various outstanding questions."

These relate to the construction of new schools, a new ward in the Central Hospital, a leper asylum for women, a ward for criminal lunatics, a jetty at the Custom-house, a break-water at Gozo, and a chapel in the poor-house; the extension of the drainage, water, and electric light works, and the reconstruction and improvement of roads, streets, and open spaces. The sums required for these works is £380,500. In view of the opposition of the Council, Mr. Chamberlain says there appears to be no prospect of raising this amount by loan, and it will, therefore, be necessary to have recourse to additional taxation. It is proposed to spread the expenditure over a period of thirteen years, and the annual amount to be raised for these services will, therefore, be about £29,000, to which must be added the additional sum of £9,000 which is to be provided every year for civil contingencies. The total annual amount to be raised by additional taxation will, therefore, be about £38,000, and it is pointed out that the Maltese will not be called upon to pay the whole of this additional taxation, as a portion of it is to be provided by increased duties on articles, which are mainly consumed by the British garrison and residents. A scheme of taxation for raising the additional amount of £38,000 has been prepared, and

his Majesty will be advised to pass by Order in Council the legislation which is required to give effect to it. Mr. Chamberlain adds:—

It is not the policy of his Majesty's Government to force either the English or Italian language upon the people of Malta, but to leave the matter entirely to their own free choice. This policy has already been carried out in the case of the Elementary schools, and, with a view to applying it to the whole educational system of the Island, it is proposed to advise his Majesty to make such provision by the Order in Council as will enable the parents of students in the Lyceum and University to exercise the same option with regard to the choice of English or Italian as they are already in a position to do in the Elementary schools, subject however, to the following exception. With a view to removing all possible ground for the imputation that the action of the Government upon the language question is due to religious motives, it has been decided to make no change with regard to the medium of instruction in the case of the Faculty of Theology and to insert a special provision in the Order in Council that the instruction shall continue to be given in the Latin or Italian language. I should add that the obstacle in the way of teaching the children in the Elementary schools both English and Italian at the same time does not exist in the case of the advanced students at the Lyceum or the University, and that it will, of course, be open to them to elect to learn both languages if they wish to do so. Provision will also be made in the Order in Council for the creation of a new appointment of Assistant Crown Advocate, who will undertake such duties as the Governor may assign to him. This appointment has been rendered necessary by the great increase in the work of the Crown Advocate, with which he is unable to cope, and which is causing delay not only in the legal work affecting Imperial interests, but also in the ordinary legal work of the Colony, and is consequently hampering the Administration of the Government of the Island. As the elected members have refused to sanction the creation of this new appointment, it has become necessary to make use of the present opportunity of doing so. Finally, provision will be made for facilitating the conduct of business and preservation of order in the Council of Government.

MALTA.

"DAILY NEWS" 5TH AUGUST 1901.

Our readers, at any rate, will have been fully prepared for the very serious news about the state of affairs in Malta which we publish

this morning. It has become the unfortunate habit of the British Parliament to turn a blind eye to any unpleasant incidents in the Empire, and the revelations of the Malta Blue-Book seemed to provoke little or no comment. Malta is small, and unarmed; and, therefore, what do her complaints matter? That is the very spirit of the new Imperialism, which has changed the lofty pride of governing well for the empty vanity of governing much. But is it a small thing that a happy and contented people should be thrown into a state of unrest? Our Imperialists will laugh at mass-meetings which can be controlled by police without batons; but is it well to laugh? Is it not our duty that these people should be happy? But what happiness can go with the methods of coercion and contempt applied to them by Mr. Chamberlain.

MALTA AND MR. CHAMBERLAIN

MASS MEETING.

HOSTILE DEMONSTRATIONS.

APPEAL OF THE MALTESE COMMITTEE.

"DAILY NEWS," AUGT. 12, 1901.

The Maltese Committee have addressed the following appeal to the Press:

To you, the independent European Press, we send a last appeal. We are a little, unarmed people, but we desire it to be known that we have decided to die rather than to live as slaves. Mr. Chamberlain imposes taxes, and wants to change a language that we speak well. It is our duty to make him comprehend that if England has force, we have rights which we shall be able to make felt. It is time to recall to England the obligations she contracted, and we will do so.

The "Secolo," commenting on the appeal says that the document shows how the great exasperation on the Malta question raised by the impudence of Mr. Chamberlain is about to enter on a critical phase. While he had the unblushing face to state in the House of Commons that the Maltese enthusiastically accepted the English language for the first time since Malta came under English rule, there burns among the people a spirit of rebellion. The people showed marvellous loyalty and fidelity as long as their rights were respected, especially the sacred one of language. Mr. Chamberlain cannot remain inactive. Why, asks the "Secolo," does he not change the language of Gibraltar, where

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they speak Spanish; or Cyprus, where they speak Greek. Evidently he is drunken with Imperialist pride, and believes he can commit any violence towards the weak. His action in Malta crowns the insensate work of Imperialism.

To-night's latest news from Malta represents the situation there as much increased in gravity. The walls of the city are covered with violent manifestoes against Mr. Chamberlain, the Nationalist Press singling out Count Strickland Della Catena, Chief Secretary of the Maltese Government, for special attack.

One of the manifestoes goes so far as to say "Prepare for a long, hard struggle. Before being British subjects remember you are Maltese citizens. Be faithful to Malta, your country, and your children will bless you and the world will applaud you. The moment is come for action. It is a question of honour. Show you have fire in you which animates all whose honour is attacked."

The police have taken the necessary steps to preserve order.

MALTA TAXES.

FULL ACCOUNT OF SUNDAY'S HOSTILE DEMONSTRATION.

"MORNING LEADER." AUGUST 12TH 1901.

Public feeling here, which has been at fever heat since the publication of Mr. Chamberlain's dispatch, culminated in a large and representative meeting which was held yesterday.

Elected members of Council and a number of leading citizens addressed the assembled masses in speeches of a most vigorous nature.

Mr. Chamberlain and the Chief Secretary to the Government, Sir Gerald Strickland, were most violently attacked, and very strong language was used in protest against the proposed taxation enacted by the Order in Council, which was stigmatised as an imposition at once unconstitutional and unjust.

The right of the Imperial Government to intervene in local questions at all was warmly opposed, and energetic action and strenuous agitation were agreed upon by the meeting enthusiastically.

Resolutions of this nature were passed unanimously, and also a vote of confidence in the elected members.

After the meeting the mob paraded the streets of the town, hooted outside the Union Club, the Soldiers' Home, and the "Chronicle" office.

The masses also hustled the superintendent of police, and made a demonstration in front of the French Consulate, where they sang the "Marseillaise."

These rowdy tactics, however, are very generally deprecated by the responsible element in the agitation.

URNEST IN MALTA.

OUTRAGE ON QUEEN VICTORIA'S STATUE.

A BIG AGITATION FORMING.

"DAILY MAIL." AUGUST 13TH 1901

The unrest in Malta is growing, and the natives, oblivious of the fact that they have to thank themselves for the action of the Colonial Office, are glibly talking of opposition by force. Fancy the Maltese speaking of "war"!

The agitators have secured the adhesion of practically all the shopkeepers of the entire island, and there will undoubtedly be fierce opposition to the payment of the taxation decreed by the British Government by Order in Council.

I learn that the sympathies of foreign nations are to be enlisted on behalf of the Italophile Maltese, and a vigorous agitation is to be carried on in England itself.

Excesses of a minor kind are certain, but too much importance need not be attached to them.

A strong hand is needed, and fortunately is forthcoming. The wise policy of Sir F. W. Grenfell, assisted by Sir Gerald Strickland will doubtless be able to combat the present agitation.

THE MALTESE PROCLAMATIONS.

"DAILY NEWS," 14 AUGT. 1901.

A couple of manifestoes of the Maltese patriotic party have been sent us for publication. We append translations. The originals are large posters printed in bold characters, with many sentences specially displayed.

CITIZENS!

Men, Women, Children. All must help. The National Committee has done its duty; you must do yours.

A desperate struggle has arisen, and perhaps nothing remains for us but to submit passively to a too powerful enemy, who has

sworn vengeance. Deluded rulers! You rob us, you calumniate us, you despise us, and you would have us loyal and friendly. Ingrates! Force is on your side, but we will die like brave men. The traitors are yourselves, since you have failed to respect your solemn promises. The infamy is yours, since you take advantage of the excessive goodness of a people and of their absolute inability to defend themselves. Malta will be yours; we shall be your servants, your slaves, if you will, but our hearts to you will be dead. Our dying legacy to our sons will be: "Avenge the wrongs which they have done to your fathers."

Maltese! Free men and officials, all of you, proclaim yourselves. In honour there can be no compromise. Priests! Teach the truth that to defend one's honour is religion. Preach the truth that whoever remains aloof is a traitor, and that union alone can save us from so much misery.

DR. F. SCEBERRAS,

President of the National Committee.

Advocate M. A. Refalo, Secretary.

EVERY ONE TO THE MEETING!

SUNDAY NEXT.

THE NATIONAL COMMITTEE.

Citizens,—Force threatens to overcome us. To insult has been added contempt. Our too great loyalty has been punished. They would have us poor, without freedom, but, above all, loyal!

Maltese! Your time has come to be doing. It is a question of your honour and your bread. Show that there is fire in your veins, such fire as every good citizen feels when his rights are trampled under foot; such fire as should burn in the spirit of a gentleman when his honour is called in question; such fire as, thank God, cries aloud to us that we should either triumph or be the basest of men. Be prepared for a long and arduous struggle. Sacred is the occasion, sacred the cause! Remember that before you are British subject you are Maltese citizens. Be faithful to your country! Your sons will bless you, and the whole world will applaud you.

DR. F. SCEBERRAS, President.

DR. M. A. REFALO, Secretary.

ENGLISH OR ITALIAN?

—"DAILY MAIL" 15TH AUGUST.

The agitation in Malta arises, simply and solely, out of the laudable attempts of the British Government to secure adequate re-

cognition of the British language in our own colony of Malta.

The matter came to the front in 1898, when Colonel Hewson, an officer in the Army Pay Department, was committed by a Maltese court of law for contempt of court because he refused to sign a deposition in a language with which he was entirely unacquainted. Therefore the British Government ordered (we quote from Mr. Chamberlain):—

"That where a British subject not born or naturalised in Malta is concerned he shall have the right to have the proceedings conducted in English, a provision in accordance with the principles of common sense and justice, and which cannot furnish any ground for a grievance on the part of the Maltese. This, however, is only one point in connection with the language question. Until recently the children in the elementary schools of Malta were taught at the same time the two foreign languages, English and Italian, and also the native Maltese language; but, as a rule they were not kept at school long enough to learn even the elements of either the English or the Italian sufficiently for any practical purpose.

"New regulations were accordingly passed providing that children are to be taught at Maltese only, and other subjects through the medium of Maltese, for the first two years; and that at the end of that period parents are to choose between English and Italian as the other language to be taught in the higher classes of the elementary schools. The language chosen is also taught through the medium of the Maltese language. As you are aware, the educational returns show that parents in Malta and Gozo, having the choice before them whether their children should be instructed in English or in Italian, have by an overwhelming majority elected for their instruction in the English language, and this decision has been arrived at by the people in spite of every kind of influence and pressure which has been brought to bear upon them by the limited class who are interested in maintaining a privileged position for the Italian language in the islands.

"Finally,

"His Majesty's Government arrived at the conclusion that the time was not far distant when the English language should be definitely adopted as the language of the courts at Malta, and the period of fifteen years from March 22, 1899, was fixed in order that those whose interests might be affected (such as the members of the legal profession) might know that the change was impending and might have ample time to prepare for it."

The most unscrupulous opposition was made to this proposal by the supporters of

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the Italian language; it was represented as preparatory to an influx of British competition, that the rising generation were to be made into camp followers and attendants of the British Army, and that the religious faith of the people would be undermined.

The elected members of the Council of Government in Malta took up the opposition and refused all taxation, and public improvements, even those most necessary to the health and comfort of the poor, until they could secure their ends.

So the British Government stepped in and decreed the necessary and urgent taxation by Order in Council, and hence the Italophile outcry.

A LANGUAGE ISSUE.

"TORONTO MAIL," AUG. 16, 1901.

From the correspondence which has been brought down it appears that the present deadlock in Malta is the outcome of a language question. The Imperial Government served notice a year or more ago on the inhabitants of the islands that 15 years hence English shall be the language of their country. This step is resented by the elected members of the island Council, who have sought to retaliate by refusing to vote supplies to carry on its necessary affairs. In this emergency the Imperial Government has fallen back upon its power to pass by order-in-Council the legislation more urgently required. The circumstances that have led up to this climax are worth recalling at this juncture, for the issue has been taking shape for many years. In the little community of 180,000 Maltese, living on a hundred miles of not very productive land on the Mediterranean, the people have three languages to master if they desire to be fully equipped for life. First of all comes the native Maltese tongue, based on the Arabic, with the addition of numerous Italian words. Italian is the tongue of the educated and of the wealthy minority, and until recently was the only language recognized in the courts of law. As Malta is a considerable military and naval post; it contains many English, who speak neither Maltese nor Italian. The disability under which they labor was brought to the attention of the Imperial Government a few years ago, when an officer attached to the Army Pay Department was committed for contempt by a Maltese court because he refused to sign a deposition written in Italian; a language with which he was wholly unacquainted. The Imperial Government immediately authorized the use of English in all the courts, and

required that all legal documents served upon English-speaking persons should be in English as well as in Italian. At the same time it gave notice that after 15 years English shall be the language of the courts. This notification is based on the fact that the Maltese are without the slightest pressure gradually adopting the English tongue in preference to the Italian. In the schools, where the parents have been given the right to decide whether their children after acquiring Maltese shall study English or Italian, nearly a hundred per cent. of the children are from choice endeavouring to master English. If this is continued for 15 years it will be no hardship at all should English become the language of the courts. That is how the Colonial Office justifies its attitude, an attitude, which, it may be added, will not be persisted in if these expectations are disappointed. Through the influence of the pro-Italian party, aided by many of the Catholic priests, who number a thousand, a bitter agitation has been kept up against this Anglicizing of the Maltese. The latter are described as a capable and loyal people, who are in some respects model citizens of the Empire. They have, however, too many languages. It is to be regretted that the circumstances should give rise to friction, yet it cannot be denied that if any language is to be placed under a ban on British territory it ought not to be the language of the British people.

THE POLITICAL SITUATION OF MALTA.

"THE TIMES," AUG. 21, 1901.

A Blue-book was issued yesterday by the Colonial Office (Cd. 715) containing "Further correspondence relating to the political condition of Malta." This correspondence deals mainly with the language question and with the subject of extra taxation to be imposed in order to defray expenditure on public works of recognized urgency. The policy of his Majesty's Government is stated in an exhaustive despatch, dated July 30, 1901, from the Secretary of State for the Colonies which closes the correspondence. The following are the most salient passages of this despatch:

The difficulties which are at present being encountered in the Government of the Island are due to the attitude of the Elected Members with regard to the Language question, the facts regarding which are as follows:—

In February, 1898, Colonel J. L. Hewson an Officer in the Army Pay Department at Malta, was committed by a Maltese Court of

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Law for contempt of Court, because he refused to sign a deposition in a language with which he was entirely unacquainted. Legislative action was accordingly taken by her late Majesty's Order in Council of the 7th of March, 1899, for the purpose of removing the injustice of a British subject unfamiliar with the Italian language being tried by a Court of Justice in a British Colony in a language which he could not understand, and of giving a litigant suffering from the same disadvantage certain facilities, not hitherto possessed by him, for the conduct of the civil proceedings to which he is a party in the English language. As I stated in my despatch of the 19th of June, the effect of the Order in Council is not to prevent Italian from being used in the Courts, but simply to provide that where a British subject not born or naturalized in Malta is concerned he shall have the right to have the proceedings conducted in English, a provision which, as I then observed, is in accordance with the principles of common sense and justice, and which cannot furnish any ground for a grievance on the part of the Maltese. This, however, is only one point in connexion with the language question. Until recently the children in the Elementary schools of Malta were taught at the same time the two foreign languages, English and Italian, and also the native Maltese language; but, as a rule, they were not kept at school long enough to learn even the elements of either the English or the Italian sufficiently for any practical purpose. New regulations were accordingly passed providing that children are to be taught Maltese only, and other subjects through the medium of the Maltese for the first two years; and that at the end of that period parents are to choose between English and Italian as the other language to be taught in the higher classes of the elementary schools. The language chosen is also taught through the medium of the Maltese language. As you are aware, the educational returns show that parents in Malta and Gozo, having the choice before them whether their children should be instructed in English or in Italian, have by an overwhelming majority elected for their instruction in the English language, and this decision has been arrived at by the people in spite of every kind of influence and pressure which has been brought to bear upon them by the limited class who are interested in maintaining a privileged position for the Italian language in the islands.

In view of these facts, his Majesty's Government arrived at the conclusion that the time was not far distant when the English language should be definitely adopted as the language of the Courts in Malta, and

the period of 15 years from the 22nd March, 1899, was fixed in order that those whose interests might be affected (such as the members of the legal profession) might know that the change was impending and might have ample time to prepare for it.....

The opponents of free choice for the people of Malta having failed in their efforts to force the Italian language on a majority which has conclusively shown that it prefers English, have now openly announced as their policy the refusal of all taxation and public improvements, even those most necessary to the health and comfort of the poor, until they can secure their ends. It has, therefore, become imperative to consider how this policy should be met. The abuse of Constitutional powers would justify the amendment of the Constitution, but his Majesty's Government are loth to take this course, and prefer to adopt a temporary alternative, hoping that reflection and common sense may before long induce the Elected Members to adopt a wiser and more patriotic policy. You are aware that when the Constitution was granted in 1849, and again when it was extended in 1857 provision was made, in view of the great Imperial interests connected with the fortress of Malta, for legislating by Order in Council in any cases in which those interests demanded it, and the Council of Government was unwilling to fulfil its duties. His Majesty's Government are of opinion that this contingency has once more arisen, and they have therefore decided to advise his Majesty to pass by Order in Council the legislation required for dealing with a portion, at any rate, of the various outstanding questions.

7. Those questions are as follows:—

- (a) Construction of new schools.
- (b) Extension of the Drainage Works.
- (c) Extension of the Water Works.
- (d) Construction of a new ward in the Central Hospital.
- (e) Construction of a Leper Asylum for Women.
- (f) Construction of a ward in the Lunatic Asylum for Criminal Lunatics.
- (g) Reconstruction and improvement of roads, streets, and open spaces.
- (h) Extension of the Electric Light Works.
- (i) Construction of a jetty at the Custom House.
- (j) Construction of a break-water at Gozo.
- (k) Construction of a Chapel in the Poor House.

8. Before dealing with these questions in detail, I would observe that they have all been treated by the elected members as inseparably connected with the Language ques-

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tion in Malta. In the case of the Schools, the Elected Members are endeavouring to obstruct the natural spread of the English language in Malta by refusing to vote the full salaries of teachers in the Elementary Schools and other sums required to carry on the work of the Education Department, while in the case of new public works, such as the Drainage Work, &c., referred to above, they have taken up the position that they refuse to vote in favour of any additional taxation so long as the Government maintain their policy with regard to the Language question.

Mr. Chamberlain, after explaining in detail the nature and utility of the above-mentioned measures, and the obstructive resistance offered to them, sets forth the fiscal measures which his Majesty's Government have decided to adopt in order to carry them out, and concludes as follows:—

As I have sufficiently indicated above, it is not the policy of his Majesty's Government to force either the English or the Italian language upon the people of Malta, but to leave the matter entirely to their free choice. This policy has already been carried out in the case of the Elementary Schools, and, with a view to applying it to the whole educational system of the Island, it is proposed to advise his Majesty to make such provision by the Order in Council as will enable the parents of students in the Lyceum and University to exercise the same option with regard to the choice of English or Italian as they are already in a position to do in the Elementary Schools, subject, however, to the following exception.

In the 5th paragraph of this despatch I have stated that Sir F. Grenfell has been instructed to give the most ample assurances that no interference with the religious convictions of the people of Malta is or has ever been contemplated by his Majesty's Government, but, with a view to removing all possible ground for the imputation that the action of the Government upon the language question is due to religious motives, it has been decided to make no change with regard to the medium of instruction in the case of the Faculty of Theology and to insert a special provision in the Order in Council that the instruction shall continue to be given in the Latin or Italian language. I should add that the obstacle in the way of teaching the children in the Elementary Schools both English and Italian at the same time, which is referred to in paragraph 3 of this despatch, does not exist in the case of the advanced students at the Lyceum or the University and that it will, of course, be open to them to elect to learn both languages if they wish to do so.

ITALY AND THE MALTA QUESTION.

GAZZETTA DI VENEZIA, AUG. 24th.

The *Gazzetta di Venezia* comments adversely upon a speech recently delivered by Signor Paolo Boselli, Deputy for Savona at a public dinner in this city; on each occasion Signor Boselli condemned in strong terms the action of the British Government in Malta in regard to the Italian language. The journal in question observes:—

"After so many absurdities regarding Albania it is now Malta's turn, and the worst is that this new cry should be taken up by a clever man like Signor Boselli, who at one time served as Under Secretary of State with the late Signor Crispi. We have already had occasion to express our opinion upon the disagreeable question of Malta, but it will not be amiss if we repeat it. We are convinced that all the nonsense that has appeared or that may unfortunately still appear in this matter can only be injurious to the Maltese themselves. We think, moreover, that in this way misunderstanding and distrust may be created between us and our friends across the British Channel for the benefit of our non-friends beyond the Alps. As regards the latter, let us not forget that for them every opportunity is good for sowing dissension, and that if no real occasion offers itself imagination is not lacking to invent one, as occurred lately when the despatch of the Mediterranean squadron to Augusta was represented as being intended as a hostile demonstration against Great Britain. Neither should we forget that the question of Malta is a purely local one, as the inhabitants of that island have not the remotest leaning in favour of any annexationist ideas."

MALTESE GRIEVANCES.

G. O. ELTZEACHER.

CONTEMPORARY REVIEW, 28th AUGUST.

Mr. Chamberlain's recent policy in Malta has been largely discussed by the Italian Press, partly with unbridled violence, partly with a feeling of genuine regret, not devoid of friendliness. The accusations brought by the Italian papers against us and against our

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policy have, to some extent, found their way into some British organs of public opinion, mostly organs of a Liberal tendency. We have been accused of having wantonly created a pronounced ill feeling against ourselves in a most important and most loyal part of our Empire, and it has even been said that Italy had become embittered against us by the high-handed provocative treatment of her Maltese sons, who had placed themselves voluntarily under our protection. It has been said that, in consequence of our ill-treatment of the Maltese, our relations with our old ally has become distinctly less cordial, if not strained. Under these circumstances, I think it opportune to render a faithful account of the impression which I have received on the spot, and to give the result of my diligent enquiries into the state of Malta and its grievances.

The chief grievance in Malta is that regarding the language question. The impression has been created abroad, especially in Italy, that we brutally force upon an unwilling and helpless Italian population the English language, which they do not want to have. The impression has been created and fortified by the constant and indiscriminate use of the most violent language of denunciation and vituperation with regard to our policy in Malta. The origin of the anti-British agitation in Malta and throughout Italy is to be found in the action of the elected members of the Council of Government in Malta. The following extract from a letter, signed by them, and dated the 1st of April, 1899, in which the Maltese grievances, especially those regarding the language question, are laid before the Governor of Malta, is characteristic and instructive. The language in this official statement is distinctly mild and unimpassioned in comparison with the violent denunciations which have appeared in the *Gazzetta di Malta* and throughout the Italian Press:

".....The despatch of the 15th March announces a future law whereby the English language will be substituted for the Italian language in the Courts of Law. This procedure degrades the whole population, who are entitled to liberty, and want to be free, and highly and very deeply resent a law which is undeserved, even by such people as are subject to the lowest state of slavery..... An imposition which places us below the position of slaves..... Political life here..... is too unhappy, because the majority of the people are compelled to keep silence..... A corrupt and corruptible policy has always been at play to terrorise the people..... This measure is being imposed upon us in the sole interest of the British Government, and to the greatest

sacrifice of our national feelings and welfare..... a law which will lower us to the utmost deplorable condition that can be conceived..... the exorbitant and most unjust expenditure upon our already exhausted revenue, etc., etc."

This document, which with unconscious humour has been dated the 1st of April, sounds the leading note in the campaign of calumny which has been commenced against us in the Italian Press. From the tone of this official and deliberate declaration it would appear that the Maltese, as the *Gazzetta di Malta* puts it, are worse governed than any land under the dominion of the Turk. It would appear, from the document of which I quoted a few characteristic passages,

1. That the English language is brutally forced upon an unwilling population;

2. That the Maltese are impoverished and ground down with an exorbitant taxation.

Let us now look into the state of Malta, in order to see whether these two violently expressed assertions, which form the basis of the anti-British agitation, are borne out by facts.

The language of Malta is not Italian, as the anti-British agitators have tried to make out. It contains, in fact, hardly more than a trace of Italian. The language in Malta is Maltese, a distinctly Semitic language, which contains hardly any Italian elements, as may be seen from the following statements made by Maltese and Italians. That grand Italian work, the *Dizionario Corografico della Italia*, Milan, 1868-1880, says, in volume 4, page 860, in the article on Malta:

"Gli abitanti in generale, di razza araba mista di Italiani e di Greci, parlano un dialetto misto, arabo nel fondo, ma in cui si riconoscono gli idiomi di quei due popoli. (The inhabitants, mostly of Arabian race, mixed with Italians and Greeks, speak a mixed dialect, which is chiefly Arabic, but in which the idioms of those two peoples may be recognised.)"

Antonio Em. Caruana says in his work, *Sull'origine della lingua Maltese*, Malta, 1896, on page 5:

"La lingua che si parla nelle Isole di Malta appartiene essa pure al tipo Semitico. (The language spoken in the Maltese Islands belongs also to the Semitic type.)"

Let us not rest satisfied with those opinions pronounced by prominent Italians and Maltese, but let us look ourselves into the alleged similarity of the Italian and Maltese languages, which is constantly being paraded by the Maltese agitators, by comparing the Lord's prayer, in Italian and in Maltese, side by side:

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THE LORD'S PRAYER.

ITALIAN.

9. Padre nostro, che sei ne' cieli sia santificato il tuo Nome.

10. Il tuo Regno venga. La tua volontà sia fatta in terra come in cielo.

11. Dacci oggi il nostro pane cotidiano.

12. E rimettici i nostri debiti, come noi ancora gli rimettiamo a' nostri debitori.

13. E non indurci in tentazione, ma liberaci dal maligno; perocchè tuo è il regno, e la potenza, e a gloria, in sempiterno. Amen.

MALTESE.

9. Missierna li inti fis-smeniet, Jitkaddes ismec.

10. Tigi saltatec Icm li trid int, chif fis-sema heeda flart

11. Hobzna ta culljum atina illum.

12. U abfrilna dnubietna, chif ahna nahfru lil min bata ghalina.

13. U la idduhalna fit-tigrib, izda ehlsna mid-den; ghaliex tighec is-saltna, u il kauna, u il gloria. ghala deijem. Amen.

From a comparison of these two versions, it will be clear that, as the Reverend C. Schlienz says: "All the Maltese words, with the exception of very few, are purely Arabic" (quoted by M. A. M. Mizzi, Malta, 1896.)

As a matter of fact, very few but the educated classes in Malta speak Italian, which according to official statements, is only spoken by about 2½ per cent. of the population. But it is doubtful whether even those 2½ per cent. of the population of Malta who speak Italian are Italian by birth or descent, especially as under the Italian speaking part of the population names such as Sammut, Zammit, Micallef, Xuereb, Buttigieg, Ellul, Si-Tayeb, Falzon, Schinas, Lanzon, Sciriha, Gatt, Cassar, Dimech, Busuttil, Chircop, Grech, Attard, Ghio, Zahra, Cutajar, Mifsud, Apap, Benjacar, etc., are being constantly met with. These names sound distinctly un-Italian, though their owners speak Italian, and partly, also agitate in favour of the supremacy of the Italian language in Malta.

Malta has belonged in turn to the Pœnicians, Carthaginians and Arabs, who are the fathers of the present Maltese language. Later on, under the rule of the Order of St. John, the official language became Latin. Italian seems only to have been introduced about one-hundred years ago, by a number of Italians, who came from the near mainland and who have succeeded until now in giving to the Italian language a preponderating influence which nothing can justify, an influence out of all proportion to the number of the Italian-speaking people in Malta; they have succeeded in getting Italian adopted as the official language in the Law Courts and in the higher schools, thus creating for the Italian clique a preserve within the Maltese population, which does not understand Italian a preserve which seems to be highly injurious to the Maltese community at large.

Until a short time ago Maltese children learned English and Italian during the few years which they spent at the voluntary elementary schools. Consequently, their little brains, unable to retain two languages, or rather three, at the same time, learned neither Italian nor English, and wasted in vain many hours of study in which the rudiments of one language, sufficient for the practical use of life, might have been acquired. In consequence of this muddle, the practical, and eminently fair, course was taken of teaching only one language in the higher classes of the elementary schools, given to parents and guardians the option of having their children taught either Italian or English. According to the Chief Secretary's speech of the 16th of January, 1901, the following overwhelming and increasing percentage of children shows in favour of English education in Malta and Gozo:

	Malta.	Gozo.
1898	97.8 per cent.	84.6 per cent.
1899	98.6 per cent.	92.2 per cent.
1900	99.4 per cent.	97.4 per cent.

These statistics betray the great eagerness of the Maltese population to acquire the English language, in direct opposition to the violent statements of the interested Italian clique, cited above. However, not wishing to base my statements entirely on statistics, I took every opportunity in Malta to talk Italian with Maltese workingmen, and found among them far more often a slight acquaintance with English, acquired at school or in the dockyards or in working for the Army, than a slight acquaintance with Italian.

But the language question has to be considered also under two further aspects:—

1. That of the provisional adoption of the English language in the courts of law, in all cases where a British subject, not being a born or naturalised Maltese, is concerned. This measure is the outcome of a case in which Colonel Hewson was committed by a Maltese court of law for contempt of court because he refused to sign a deposition in Italian, with which language he was entirely unacquainted. It is obviously unfair to a British subject to be compelled to give evidence in a British colony before a British court of justice in a foreign language, which has not even the justification for its use that it is the language of the people of that colony.

2. That of the definitive adoption of the English language in the law courts after 15 years, according to Her Majesty's Order in Council of the 7th of March 1899. It is evidently an anomaly, and an anomaly with hardly any justification, that the language of the Court of Malta should be Italian. The

vast majority of the inhabitants of Malta, 180,000 in number, speak Maltese, and Maltese only; the group second in numerical strength in the English community, composed of the 'personnel' of the garrison, the fleet, and the civilian English residents, numbering more than 25,000; the Italians and Italian-speaking Maltese number only about 5,000, and have, so far, imposed their language upon 180,000 Maltese and 25,000 Englishmen. How very small the number of the Italian-speaking Maltese is may be seen from the fact that their exceedingly well-written organ the "Gazetta di Malta," which is probably read by every pro-Italian Maltese as a patriotic duty, has a circulation of only 750 copies, according to official statistics. From private enquiries, however, it would appear that this figure is far too high, and that in reality the circulation of the organ of anti-British propaganda does not even reach 300 copies.

Meanwhile the English language has been, and continues to be, spreading fast. Mr. M. A. M. Mizzi, a Maltese, says in his book, "A Voice from Malta," (Malta, 1896):

"The English language in Malta is in fact fast becoming the *Linguaggio dominante*.... It is found by far the most useful language for the community to speak on social and commercial grounds. Its own utilitarian merits will ensure its spread throughout the island."

But the introduction of the English language is not even an injustice to the Italian-speaking small minority, for the Italian-speaking upper class in Malta is not unacquainted with English. On the contrary, on the whole it speaks English already, and speaks it well, as I have found by personal observation. It can consequently not be considered a hardship for the small fraction of the small Italian-speaking minority, which might at present be insufficiently acquainted with English, lawyers at Court, etc., if they are given fifteen years wherein to perfect themselves in the language which, according to the circumstances of Malta, should be the official language of the country, and which the vast majority of the community demands, as may be seen from the statistics given above.

Now let us see why the vast majority of the Maltese have opted in favour of the English language, and why the circumstances of Malta demand a knowledge of English, by looking into the material conditions of these islands. Malta and Gozo have together a civil population of about 185,000 people in an area of 116 square miles. Consequently, there are about 1,600 people to the square mile in Malta, compared with 250 in Holland, 300 in Belgium, and

mile in Great Britain. Malta is considered the most densely populated country in the world. Its rural industries produce only a fraction of what the population requires, in spite of the untiring industry of the farmers, and manufacturing industries can only be carried on on a very small scale, owing to the absence of native coal. Consequently, Malta imports huge quantities of foreign food stuffs, and exports very little produce of its own. The Maltese imports, chiefly of food stuffs, exceed the exports by about £1,000,000 a year, an excess which is enormous, and which has to be paid for somehow. This excess of foreign imports, which is in proportion more than 50 per cent. greater than the excess of our own imports over our exports—on which topic the author of *Drifting* and Mr. Morgan-Browne have given lately a lot of information in the columns of this REVIEW—is paid for by the enormous sum which the British fleet, the British garrison, our merchant shipping and our huge and ever-increasing dockyards, pour into Malta. How much of the soldiers' and sailors' pay is spent in Malta it is, of course, difficult to say. The Chief Secretary's estimate, in his speech of the 12th April, 1901, that "from £1,300,000 to £1,400,000 is being yearly poured from the Imperial Exchequer in ever-increasing volume into Malta", may be assumed to be correct. How freely the British Garrison spends its money in Malta, and how largely the Maltese cater for our garrison, may be gauged by the fact that no less than 2,187 licensed houses exist in Malta. As the Maltese themselves are the soberest of sober people, it must needs follow that this huge number of licensed houses, which in proportion are three times more numerous than the licensed houses existing in England and Wales, are, together with the other shops and the British dockyards, the chief resources of Malta's prosperity. For Malta is prosperous, in spite of the statement quoted in the beginning of this article about "the exorbitant and most unjust expenditure upon our already exhausted revenue." The casual traveller cannot help noticing the prosperity of Malta, which is evident from the nearly complete absence of visible property usual in southern countries from the enormous number of most beautiful and gorgeously decorated churches, for which Malta is famous everywhere, from the cleanliness of the streets, and the well-kept appearance of the walls and buildings.

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ed in Malta is officially estimated at £1,000,000 sterling, which would correspond with £200,000,000 sterling worth of jewellery for Great Britain, and would average £25 worth for each Maltese family of five heads. But the Maltese do not put all their wealth into jewellery. Maltese money invested in stocks is estimated at £2,000,000 whilst £540,000 is in circulation and £64,085 is on deposit with the savings banks and other banks. Consequently, that part of the Maltese savings which is invested in money and in Stock Exchange securities may be considered to amount, on an average, to not less than £75 per family of five heads. Surely these figures can in no way give the impression that the Maltese are weighed down by poverty.

Now let us look into the "exorbitant and most unjust expenditure" of Malta, and see what this expenditure is used for, or, as the Italian agitators would have it, squandered on. The total revenue of Malta amounted, in 1899, to £354,265, of which sum £157,000 can hardly be considered an impost on the population, because this sum was derived from interest on funds and from the yield of railways, waterworks, lighting, rents, fines, the Post Office, etc. The remaining part of the revenue, namely, £197,000, was derived from Customs in the following way:

£83,000 on grain.

£11,000 on dead meat.

£88,000 on spirits, wine and beer.

As probably nine-tenths of the imported spirits, wine and beer are consumed by the British community, the Maltese being extremely sober, it would appear that the whole Maltese contribution to the Customs revenue would amount to about £100,000, or about 10s. per head of the whole population: civil, military and naval. If we consider the wealth of Malta, of which the figures given above give some indication, and bear in mind that the British citizen contributes per head of population about £5 per annum to Imperial and local taxation, it would appear that the average Maltese, who pays about 10s. per annum, is far better off than the average Britisher. I should like to mention that the duty on imported grain, yielding £83,000 per annum, which appears exorbitant, enables the Maltese farmer to raise corn. Consequently the Maltese themselves are strongly in favour of that tax, and have

Charitable Institutions	£49,000
Public Works	52,000
Police	41,000
Water and Light	28,000
Law	22,000
Schools	15,000
Pensions	16,000
Customs	11,000
Post Office	14,000
Public Health	9,000
Contribution to Military Service	5,000

The whole of this "exorbitant and most unjust expenditure" does not even go out of the country, but goes into Maltese pockets, including even Malta's contribution to the military service of £5,000 per annum, which is spent on the Malta Militia. To this force the Imperial Government contributes £42,000 per annum. Malta's Defence Budget of £5,000 per annum is in proportion about onesixtieth of our own defence expenditure. *There are no taxes whatever in Malta.*

But the Maltese, or rather the Italian-speaking section of the Maltese, not only object to this "exorbitant and most unjust expenditure" in general, but to the expenditure on Police, Schools, and Drainage in particular. As the Maltese is rather quick at using the knife in a quarrel, just like his neighbour in Sicily, and as, further-more, the policemen are all Maltese, the objection to an adequate police expenditure which ensures the safety of the public is unwarranted. The Government Schools have increased from 97 in 1898 to 149 in 1899. The tuition in the primary and the secondary schools is free, and the thirst for knowledge in the population is shown by the fact that, though the schools are not compulsory, there was a total of not less than 15,669 scholars attending. But Malta has not only elementary and secondary schools; it has the inestimable advantage of possessing also technical education, a Lyceum, and even a University, which confers the B.A., M.D., LL.D., and D.D. degrees. In short, Malta gives, with a minimum of expenditure, a maximum of advantages to its citizens. According to the latest statistics, the mortality in the drained towns of Malta was 22.53 per 1,000, whilst the mortality in the undrained zone outside the towns was 30.44 per 1,000. These figures, together with the reports given by Maltese medical men, are, I think, the strongest argument possible in favour of executing a drainage system which the Government of Malta wishes to execute, but to which the small Italian-speaking section of the Maltese objects, as it objects to the railway, to the electric lighting, though these meet a distinct want, and

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I think, considered all in all, that the community of Malta may be pronounced to be a model community with a model administration and a model population. More than 100 years ago Boisgelin described the Maltese as industrious, active, economical and brave, remarkably sober, extremely fond of ornaments, and more attached to their country than any other nation in the world. These characteristics the Maltese nation has preserved up to the present date. These excellent qualities have brought success to the Maltese, wherever they have gone. Consequently, men who hail from Malta may be found everywhere round the shores of the Mediterranean, and inland as far as Khartoum, where they occupy positions of trust and of importance, and where they are highly esteemed for their linguistic accomplishments. Maltese being very similar to Arabic, their success on African soil may be partly explained by their facility of making themselves understood. With a thorough knowledge of English, however, not only the shores of Africa, but the shores of the whole world will stand open to the rapidly increasing numbers of these excellent people, for whom their tiny islands are getting too small. Consequently, the measures inaugurated to enable the Maltese to acquire a knowledge of English, if they wish to learn it, will no doubt prove highly beneficial to the people in the future; and already they recognize the advantage offered by the tuition of English, as may be seen from the statistics given above. The opposition comes solely from the small pro-Italian section, who always talk loudly in the name of the Maltese, but are consciously or unconsciously, working in direct opposition to the best interests of the people whom they pretend to represent. What their motives are in sowing hatred without cause I leave the reader to decide. Their last misrepresentation to the people is that the British want Maltese to learn English in order to be able to send the men to Africa and make their women to work for the soldiers. This lie, which has been repeated in Malta even in my presence by educated Italo-Maltese men, would be atrocious were it to be believed by the uneducated Maltese.

Apparently this pro-Italian agitation of a small Maltese clique is purposeless. Malta is so near southern Italy that the Maltese are well aware how their Italian neighbours are weighed down by the hardships of military service and by exorbitant taxation. They know what tobacco, sugar, salt, etc., cost in Italy, and what they cost in their own country. Consequently, I was not astonished to hear from a Maltese that probably not one quarter

per cent. of the Maltese population would like to become Italians. Yet this pro-Italian agitation in Malta may possibly bring about a cession of Malta to Italy. Great Britain has often ceded territory to friendly Powers for sentimental reasons. We have given up the invaluable harbours of the Ionian Islands, and under a Liberal Government, not many years ago, we are said to have been near ceding Gibraltar to Spain. Consequently it may not be impossible that if the Maltese pro-Italian agitation grows in strength as it is growing in violence, a future Liberal Government may offer Malta to Italy in some form or another.

There exists a not uninfluential school of thinkers who would willingly see the Mediterranean become a French lake, because they say that we cannot hold the Mediterranean in time of war, that we should have to rely, for our road to India and Australia, on the Cape route, and that it would consequently be senseless to hold in time of peace what we should have to abandon in time of war. There are other naval strategists who would prefer a strong naval base in Egypt to the Malta station, who say that, owing to the shortening of distances by steam power, the importance of Malta has as much diminished for the Fleet as it has for the mercantile marine. I am not judge on naval matters; but I fear that considerations such as these might lead to a cession of Malta to Italy under a Liberal Government, especially if our difficulties all over the world should keep on increasing. The consequence for Malta of such a cession would be a largely decreased income, owing to our absence on the one side—for Italy would certainly not spend £1,300,000 to £1,400,000 yearly in Malta—and a largely increased taxation, similar to that in Italy, on the other side. Our withdrawing from Malta would mean the immediate impoverishment of these Islands and the rapid emigration of the majority of its congested population.

The Maltese are wrong to allow themselves to be led by pro-Italian agitators. They have no cause for complaint, yet they have an imaginary grievance. They are tired of good King Log, and call him a tyrant and do not think that Providence may possibly send them a King Stork in his stead.

In the time which I have spent in Malta I have learned to respect and to esteem the Maltese for their sterling qualities, and I should be sorry to see them brought to misery by the wild and purposeless course on which they are embarking, and which may land them where they little expect.

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THE MALTESE QUESTION.

"MORNING POST," AUGUST 28TH 1901.

We received a few weeks ago a copy of one of the leading papers of the island containing a strong indictment of Mr. Chamberlain's policy with regard to the suppression of the native language and other matters. As the subject lay rather beyond the scope of suburban journalism, we referred it to an able Paddingtonian who has just spent some months in Malta, and have received the following reply, which will interest many of our readers:

"It is always difficult to set out off-hand the rights and wrongs of any dispute. With regard to the Maltese people, they are very sensitive and given to fancy themselves slighted without any reason. Moreover, they are rather inclined to believe that the English people are fond of domineering over them and showing their power. In this they are not, perhaps, some might say, entirely wrong. This is, however, only a matter of sentiment and of no great importance. At the same time ideas, whether well or ill founded, should not be passed over lightly, especially with a sensitive people like the Maltese, who are ready to make a grievance and to take offence where none is meant.

"With regard to the language question there can be no doubt that it is rather unfair towards the English that the language of the Government should not be used in the Law Courts. All well-educated Maltese know English as well as, if not better than, their British fellow-subjects, and now that English is being gradually introduced into the schools, all the country-folk will soon understand it equally well. It is only because they do not fully comprehend the innovation that the Maltese are angry about it. At the present moment the native patois is used in the schools, the English or Italian is compulsory besides. The majority choose English. This fact speaks for itself. The terrors of our language cannot be so great if they prefer it to Italian, which is spoken in the homes of many of the Maltese nobility. Of course the people are far better able to get employment and earn much higher wages if they know English. Most of them see this, and the Maltese generally look up to us and think well of us. It rests with ourselves to maintain these sentiments.

"I do not think the question of religion comes in at all. Like most Roman Catholic nations the Maltese are very fervent, but there is seldom on this point any unpleasant-

ness with the English. The natives of Malta are on the whole a most loyal race if well treated and not snubbed. Their little weaknesses and fads are worthy of every consideration."

PRECAUTIONS AT MALTA.

"DAILY MAIL," AUGUST 27TH.

The statue of Queen Victoria, upon which a disgraceful outrage was recently committed by some unknown person, is being cleansed by order of the Public Works Department, and it is hoped that all trace of the nitrate of silver will eventually be removed.

The local anti-English Press continues to publish long articles denouncing the policy of Mr. Chamberlain and the Governor. The authorities have decided to enrol a provisional force of 106 picked men from the Royal Marine Artillery, who are to be engaged for special duty, no doubt in view of the present agitation. Such a step has no precedent in Malta since the British occupation.

The Dante Alighieri Society for the propagation of the Italian language abroad has decided to establish a number of branches in Malta.

MALTA AND THE KING.

FIRM ATTITUDE OF THE GOVERNMENT.

"DAILY MAIL," AUG. 8, 1901.

The agitation is still being fostered against the language decrees of the Government, but those who direct it hope to gain the greatest measure of popular support from spreading the belief that they may compel the authorities to recede from the position they have taken up.

In this they are greatly mistaken; the Government will not modify its policy in any respect, nor will the Chief Secretary, Sir Gerald Strickland, who enjoys the official confidence, be promoted, as the Italian papers suggest, to any other sphere of usefulness—in other words, "shelved."

There is no doubt that the general public increasingly appreciates that the objects for which the taxation has been decreed by Order in Council are altogether vital and urgent. But the Italian element in Malta knows effectively how to indulge in moral terrorism, and this is the policy now in force.

In an oracular article addressed to the citizens of Malta the "Gazzetta" says:—

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"The situation is grave. Our rulers cause us tears of blood. Our humiliation is at its height. Let us exhaust every legal means of defence. Justice is with us; with our rulers lies the despotism. Forward! and let us take courage.

"A solemn, popular petition," continues the "Gazzetta," "which is to be sent to King Edward, will be placed before the public in a few days. This petition is for the purpose of contradicting the false statements which are so detrimental to us.

"Maltese!" concludes the appeal, "affix your signatures. In defence of our holy cause funds will be required. Be prepared to lay out your share. Duty demands it; religion inspires it!"

The local merchants have offered to rebuild at their own expense the statue of Queen Victoria which was injured.

MALTA.

"THE SCOTSMAN," AUG. 29, 1901.

Any stick will do to beat a "lean and malicious fox." By that elegant and decorous title one of the signatories of the appendix to "an appeal by the Maltese people" much commented upon and commended by the Radical Press of London, designates the Colonial Secretary. In phraseology only a little less crude, the Opposition scribes echo not only the views on the language question obligingly furnished to them from Malta but the abuse directed against Mr. Chamberlain with which the island agitators flavour their petitions for what they call their rights. Abuse, one gathers, is much more to the taste of these Radical censors of the head of the Colonial Office than argument or fact. There is very little of either solid fact or sound argument in the Maltese pamphlet; on the other hand, it is full of misrepresentation and casuistry. But the document furnishes the enemies of Mr. Chamberlain with an opportunity of flinging a few more handfuls of mud at the statesman who so grievously stirs their rancour and ire. It seems, in Mr. Labouchere's phrase, to offer a chance of giving "another fall to Joe;" and they eagerly jump at it without waiting to look whether they have not seized upon a foul and untrustworthy weapon, and whether any injury they may succeed in inflicting will be injury to their country's interests, and to Malta, rather than to the Minister whom they fear and hate with such good reason. It is a godsend for these patriots in this slack season to fall upon an excuse for denouncing Mr. Chamberlain's egre-

gious and supercilious arrogance, his "high-handed, pushful ways," his passion for "riding roughshod" over local sentiment and free institutions, his knack of turning a loyal and peaceful people into a set of moody, discontented, and exasperated men, and his other notorious faults and failings daily denounced in the Little Englander Press. If the facts in no way bear out the charges, so much the worse for the facts. Without Mr. Chamberlain to belabour and traduce, the Radical journalist's occupation would be gone.

The "appeal from the Maltese people," which has tempted the Opposition pack to open cry against the Colonial Secretary, is not a genuine appeal, nor does it really come from the people of Malta. Any unprejudiced person might satisfy himself of this by giving a little attention to its terms and its origin. It contains what may be described as a veiled spirit of sedition. It intimates that Malta is a possession of this country not so much by right as by sufferance. It declares that the Maltese people have been baulked of their freedom; they "have claimed in vain their home rule." The truth is, Malta has enjoyed a larger amount of freedom than has ever been bestowed on any locality whose prime place is that of a fortress and a naval station; and it has been contented and prosperous under that freedom. The document speaks of "the language of the country—the Italian." The language of the country is patois unintelligible to Italians; only a minute percentage of the native population are acquainted with the tongue of the peninsula, and they have no desire to know it. The proportion of parents and guardians of children that had reached the third standard in the elementary schools who chose English in place of Italian as the language to be taught was 95.4 per cent. in 1898, 97.1 in 1899, and 98.5 in 1900. The desire for Italian, as gauged by the free choice made by "the Maltese people" who had children at school dwindled in the three years from 5.6 to 1.5 per cent.—to the point of extinction. It is in the face of this notorious and undeniable fact that the concocters of the appeal—they do not adhibit their names to it—venture to speak of Italian as "the language of the country," and denounce the wise and necessary steps of preparing to make English the official tongue in the law Courts as an outrage on Maltese liberties. The violent and unscrupulous opposition which Sir Francis Grenfell and Sir Gerald Strickland, the Governor and Secretary of the island, have had to face has come not from the mass of the islanders, but from a disappointed, ambitious, and disaffected few, who can very justly be described as mischievous

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agitators. Mr. Chamberlain spoke the absolute truth when he stated on the last day of the session that the so-called elected members of the Maltese Council had grossly abused the powers conferred upon them in 1887, and that the interests of the Empire and the public health and safety of Malta imperatively called for that exercise of superior authority which put an end to the attempt to paralise government by refusing to vote taxation. How these powers have been allowed to fall into the hands of a small clique is tersely set forth in an article in the Maltese paper, "Risorgimento," quoted in the recent Blue-book. It arises from the apathy and ignorance displayed by the mass of the people. They do not choose to come forward and exercise their privileges at election time, and so let their affairs fall into the hands of noisy and dangerous demagogues, who, as Mr. Chamberlain has truly said, represent only 2 per cent. of the electors. "No one comes forward as a candidate but the usual political agitators and those who want to avail themselves of the Council for giving vent to their hatred of the English Government, wasting at the same time the precious time of the Council in long speeches on questions that have already been definitely settled, and in a language so trivial and indecorous as to have brought the Council to the level of a shop, if not something worse." It is a travesty of freedom, an abuse of representative institutions, of which larger examples are found elsewhere. But nowhere has the evil appeared in more glaring form or threatened greater danger to the community than in Malta. Perhaps when the population has been better instructed in the language they prefer and in their political rights and duties, there will be an improvement. But in the meantime the Government of Malta has to be carried on; the safety of a post of observation and control on which more than one of our rivals look with envious eyes must be guarded against any weakness, internal or external. We cannot permit a critical part of the machinery of Empire to be tampered with by a parcel of intriguing lawyers, and revengeful priests.

The authors of the appeal show something of their hand, besides revealing something of their identity, in a number of signed extracts from letters that are appended to the pamphlet. A flower or two of language has already been culled from this correspondence. Most of the letters, it is noted, are written by parish priests, and this recalls the fact that the last constitutional crisis in Malta arose over the question of mixed marriages, where clerical was pitted against secular authority and got the worst of it. Clericalism

may be beaten, but it does not easily forge or forgive. The priestly assumption is that the permission of free choice of languages in education is an attack on the religion of the island. To remove any possible ground for this imputation, it has been decreed that no change shall be made in the medium of instruction in the Faculty of Theology, which will continue to be taught in Latin and Italian only. An archpriest orator at the meeting held on 30th June last declared that taxes and the English language were the two means that the British Government were using to drive the Maltese out of Malta; and another priest, who has contributed a letter to the pamphlet addressed "to the English nation," solemnly pronounces that the Maltese who submit to the English language will be "the real assassins of their descendants." At least the Maltese in the proportion of nearly 99 to 1 commit the assassinations voluntarily by instructing that their descendants shall be taught in the offending tongue. Another Maltese patriot—the author of the phrase of the fox—proclaims incoherently "the awakening of the Maltese, exhausted in a thousand ways to the total benefit of the brilliant Utopia of Joe Chamberlain;" yet another announces that they are ready "to fight to the last days of their lives and die like heroes." What for? It is mendaciously pretended that the Government are seeking to make the English language compulsory in the Courts and in the schools. The new educational regulations provide that children are to be taught Maltese only, and other subjects through the medium of Maltese, for the first two years; after which parents choose English or Italian for the higher classes, Maltese being the medium of instruction. The effect of the new Order in Council regarding the language in the Maltese Courts has been clearly explained by Mr. Chamberlain; it is

"Not to prevent Italian from being used in the Courts, but simply to provide that where a British subject not born or naturalised in Malta is concerned he shall have the right to have the proceedings conducted in English, a provision which is in accordance with justice, and commonsense, and which cannot furnish any ground for a grievance on the part of the Maltese."

The provision is made for English coming more fully into use in courts after a preparatory period of fifteen years from 22nd March 1899. Not much here, one would think, to furnish subject of complaint to a loyal colony, as Malta undoubtedly is. No much ground for aiming "a well directed blow at the lean and malicious fox." Still less excuse is there for men of education and socia

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standing in Malta to spout their stale sedition; or for party writers at home to discover in Malta "an ugly resemblance to South Africa," the handiwork in both cases being, of course, that of Mr. Chamberlain.

"ILLUSTRATED LONDON NEWS," AUG. 31, 1901.

From Malta comes a pamphlet appealing to the English nation against the decision of the Imperial Government to make English the official language of the Maltese. This is described in the pamphlet as an act of tyranny. As Italian is not the native language of the Maltese, the charge of tyranny is rather melodramatic. As the political and commercial interests of Malta are entirely English, and as English is the one foreign tongue that the Maltese have shown any desire to learn, it follows that English should be the official language of the island, and not Italian.

THE CONDITION OF MALTA.

DECLINE OF BRITISH TRADE.

Governor Sir F. W. Grenfell has transmitted to the Colonial Office the usual abstract of the Malta Blue book for 1900. The accounts for the past financial year show a total revenue of £357,524 13s. 3½d., with an expenditure of £365,943 17s. 1½d. Of the expenditure £359,202 19s. 8½d. was charged to the Consolidated Revenue, the balance, £6740 17s. 5d., being the value of stores issued and adjustments from Surplus and Deficit Accounts; the excess of expenditure over revenue was covered by the transfer of £1678 6s. 5½d. in aid of revenue from the General Reserve Fund. The actual revenue collected in 1900 under the ordinary sources was £356,758 6s. 10½d., or £4257 13s. 1½d. below the forecast, and £2492 11s. 8½d. over the actual receipts of the previous year. The section of the Report dealing with imports and exports speaks of the gradual supersession of British goods. Foreign goods, says the Report, are generally inferior to British goods, and this partly accounts for the difference in price. I understand, however, that some foreign goods, such as electro-plate, chiefly imported from Germany, and matches, which come from Belgium and Germany, are not only cheaper but are considered as good as those imported from the United Kingdom, whilst glassware imported from France is much cheaper and is nearly as good as that of the United Kingdom. Cravats and felt hats are also at present being extensively imported from Italy. There is likewise reason

to believe that even in the case of earthenware, which until quite lately was practically entirely imported from the United Kingdom, British manufactures will soon be confronted with a keen competition on the part of Italian firms. The principal reasons why foreign goods are gradually but steadily superseding British goods at Malta and other places are—(a) the activity displayed by foreign commission agents in making themselves acquainted with the requirements and tastes of the people of the country to which they are sent; their ability to speak several languages, which enables them to mix freely with the population, and the ingratiating manners by which they succeed in making numberless acquaintances and some friends. These foreign commission agents scarcely ever leave Malta without having obtained some new customers, and without having secured a considerable number of orders, not only in towns but also in the remotest corners of the Island; (b) the pains taken by foreign manufacturers in supplying local requirements and in adapting the goods to the different tastes above referred to, not only by providing cheap goods for those with whom quality is not a point of much consideration, but also goods of the particular pattern and quality reported by their agents to be preferred by their old and new customers.

The Report says nothing on the language question. In some general observations by Sir G. Strickland, the Chief Secretary to the Government, there is an analysis of expenditure on public works. We quote the following passages:—"The expenditure on public works was kept within the narrowest limits, and in 1900 no important work of extraordinary nature was carried out, although many are urgently required if Malta is to keep pace with the modern development of other civilised countries. Unless, however, additional revenue is authorised to provide funds for large works entailing extraordinary expenditure, the Government must put off indefinitely works such as the drainage of the villages, the extension of the water supply, the erection of a leper asylum for women, the building of a ward in the lunatic asylum for criminal lunatics (who, for want of space, are at present allowed to associate with other patients), the construction of a new hospital on modern sanitary principles to supersede the existing central hospital, which is both unsanitary and inadequate to the population of the Island, the construction of a break-water at Gozo, the extension of electric light, the enlargement of schools to avoid overcrowding, and the building of new ones for accommodating about 5000 children still

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awaiting admission; not to mention other works of public utility. The financial condition of the Island is, on the other hand, prosperous, the taxation per head is low, and the country could well afford a small sacrifice on the part of each individual for the common weal; a considerable portion of the taxes (viz., on drink) is paid by British, who are not represented in the Council of Government. Money raised by additional taxation for the above works would circulate in the Island to the advantage of the working classes. The general prosperity of the Island appears to have been on the increase throughout 1900. The rise in the prices of commodities due to the War appears to have had in Malta the effect of improving generally the value of agricultural produce and the prosperity of the farmer. The works undertaken by the naval authorities for the construction of two large docks in the French Creek increased the demand for labour, making it easy for any able-bodied man to find employment; this has taken place without unduly inflating the rates of wages. The sanitary precautions that were taken to prevent plague appearing in Malta proved effective, and trade was not unduly hampered thereby."

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"DAILY MAIL," AUG. 31, 1901.

The report of the Chief Secretary to the Government of Malta for the year 1900 was issued yesterday. The total revenue was £357,524, and the expenditure £365,943.

Taxation contributed £193,367 under the head of Customs, £5,519 in licenses, £1,811 in stamp duty; the Post Office showed a profit of £15,219, while fees and reimbursements brought in £24,604. A large portion of the Customs duty is not paid by the Maltese, but by sailors who visit the island.

The Chief Secretary remarks that the condition of the island is prosperous, the taxation per head low, and the country could well afford a small sacrifice on the part of each individual for public works that are necessary if Malta is to keep pace with the modern development of other civilised countries.

The drainage of the villages, the extension of the water supply, the erection of a leper asylum for women, a ward for criminal lunatics, and a modern hospital are among the more urgent necessities of the island.

The report observes that foreign goods are gradually but steadily superseding British manufactures, and the usual reasons are

quoted—greater activity of foreign commission agents, their ability to speak several languages, and their ingratiating manners.

THE MALTA TROUBLE.

ITALY UNWILLING TO INTERFERE.

MALTESE NOW LOOKING TO FRANCE.

"DAILY NEWS," AUG. 31, 1901.

According to news received here from Malta, the bad feeling against Mr. Chamberlain's policy is increasing instead of calming down. The leaders of the agitation, who until now had hoped for liberal support from the Italian Government because of their nationality, begin to doubt the expediency of trusting to that Power, given the close and cordial relations existing between Rome and London. In fact, it appears that, tentative advances having been made by the Maltese, they were given to understand by the Government here that Italy, much as she sympathises, cannot mix herself in what is an internal question of the British Empire. According to the report received here, it seems that the Maltese now think that France would be perhaps the best and most willing Power to hold out a helping hand.

A White Book on Malta (Cd. 431-21, price 3d.) was issued yesterday. It contains a report on the Malta Blue Book for the year 1900 by the Chief Secretary. The accounts for the past financial year show a total revenue of £357,524, with an expenditure of £365,943. The actual revenue collected in 1900 under the ordinary sources was £356,758 or £4,257 below the forecast, and £2,492 over the actual receipts of the previous year. The imports and exports of dutiable goods for 1900 show a considerable increase in value, compared with the totals for the preceeding year. The value of the imports was £7,434,239, against £6,668,961, an increase of £765,328; that of exports, £6,471,567, against £5,449,501, an increase of £1,022,066. The increase in the imports is due principally to larger importation of goods in transit from foreign countries and in a smaller extent to improvement of the imports from the United Kingdom, there having been a decrease in the importation of goods from the British possessions. The imports from the United Kingdom amounted to £305,010, against £297,830 in 1899, an increase of £7,180.

The principal reasons why foreign goods are gradually but steadily superseding British

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goods at Malta and other places are: (a) the activity displayed by foreign commission agents in making themselves acquainted with the requirements and tastes of the people of the country to which they are sent, their ability to speak several languages, which enables them to mix freely with the population, and the ingratiating manners by which they succeed in making numberless acquaintances and some friends; (b) the pains taken by foreign manufacturers in supplying local requirements and in adapting the goods to the different tastes above referred to, not only by providing cheap goods for those with whom quality is not a point of much consideration, but also goods of the particular pattern and quality reported by their agents to be preferred by their old and new customers. Of the total number of steamers entering the port 1,474 were British, with a tonnage of 2,412,960, against 1,075 of all other nationality, with a tonnage of 1,060,616.

During the year an ordinance was passed providing a colonial allowance of £640 a year for officers from Maltese corps transferred to Imperial military service, chargeable on the revenue of the Government of Malta for ten years. This was prompted by the offer of the Imperial Government to grant six commissions in the Imperial forces to officers in local regiments. The most remarkable incident in 1900, Sir G. Strickland says, was the spontaneous outburst of loyalty on the part of all the Maltese on the occasion of the relief of Ladysmith. The earnestness of the feeling shown on that occasion has never been approached in Malta, and is an eloquent proof of the true sentiment that binds the Maltese population of Malta to the other loyal subjects of the Empire. No fewer than nine Maltese officers have served in the British Army during the war in South Africa.

THE MALTESE LANGUAGE QUESTION.

"TIMES," SEPT. 2, 1901.

Sir,—The Maltese may be, as they claim, invincible, but for all that they speak Arabic and have done so since the Moslem conquest of 870 A.D. Previous to that date they spoke Phœnician, popularly called Hebrew, from which the transition into bad Arabic was easy. To all unversed in Maltese politics it must appear strange that attempts are still made to pass off as Italian a speech unknown in Italy, but readily understood at Tunis and in other Arabic-speaking lands.

I am sometimes asked to account for

the number of unrecognizable words in Maltese, and have to explain that the Barbary corsairs (largely renegadoes) employed a speech called *sabir* or *saper*, which the Knights of St. John had to know, especially when taken or taking prisoners. This tongue consisted of Turkish, and therefore some Arabic, Spanish, Italian, Provençal (very little French as we know it), and much Berber, which name includes the North African family of languages. From it Maltese has borrowed, as also from Latin on account of the island religion being the Roman Catholic.

I am not greatly concerned about the rivalry between English and Italian, which will inevitably be settled in course of time. Down to the Crimean War proceedings in the English Consular Court at Constantinople were conducted in Italian; but French first and later English have almost driven Italian out of the Levant; while everything is being done by the French to substitute for it their own language in Tunis.

Pity it is that the Maltese, while employing English for home use, do not learn their own language written with the Arabic characters. Being illiterate, a Maltese emigrant can only earn labourer's wages; but those who afterwards at cost of severe pains learn to read, write, and keep accounts in Arabic obtain much higher pay. In that language commercial correspondence is conducted between Morocco, Senegal, Timbuktù, Kano, and so on from the Guinea Coast to Somaliland. Hitherto a tyrannous oligarchy of clergymen and lawyers have succeeded in obstructing changes advantageous to their humbler fellow-subjects.

I am, Sir, your obedient servant,
Westgate-on-Sea. F. DUPRE THORNTON.

"MORNING LEADER," SEPT. 3, 1901.

The Maltese protest is a general subject of conversation, but no one expects that the Government will take any steps to conciliate the islanders. In fact, the general feeling is that while Count Strickland remains Maltese Secretary no change can be expected. Count Strickland is the son of Captain Walter Strickland, R.N., who was a school-fellow of Sir Roger Tichborne (his name is mentioned in the famous trial.)

Captain Strickland, who was himself the heir of an old North of England Tory family, married a Maltese lady, through whom his son, the present Secretary, derived his title of Count della Catena. Count Strickland was created a K.C.M.G. in 1897. His family

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now hold an important position in Malta, but they are regarded as the heads of the Anglicising and unpatriotic party.

No one credits Mr. Chamberlain with any knowledge of the history or internal affairs of Malta. Count Strickland was president of the Cambridge Union, and married a daughter of Earl de la Warr. Personally he is esteemed, but the Tory traditions of his family and their position in Malta incapacitate him for dealing fairly with the present crisis.

THE MALTESE LANGUAGE QUESTION.

"TIMES" 2ND SEPTEMBER 1901.

We have received from Malta a pamphlet purporting to be an appeal to the English nation by the Maltese people. This appeal, dated July and unsigned, sets forth the views of the Maltese with regard to the language question, and consists for the most part of extracts from the letter addressed to the Governor on July 16th by the elected members of the Council of Government. It contains also two appendices, the first of which, described here as "a plebiscite in writing," gives the answers received from the various Maltese officials and others who were invited to assist at the public meetings convened by the agitators, while the second relates the resolutions passed at these meetings and submitted to the Governor. The tenor of the whole document can best be conveyed by a quotation from the appeal:— "The Maltese were always and are still proud to belong to England, but they have always claimed, in vain, that part of benefits which from the Union should accrue to them..... Malta longed for a political freedom in the administration of its internal government—that freedom which is an indispensable element wherewith a people may develop its own resources and follow the European progress. It is painful to us to record that we have never had this freedom..... In 1887 the Constitution was improved; but soon afterwards the principal parts of it were destroyed, and what remains became null and void through the abuses of the veto of the Governor, through the corrupted and corruptive policy of the Government, and through the Orders in Council. The Government, seeing that the population was suffering in silence, wished to push their pretensions to the point of attacking the language of the country—the Italian. Since 1830 a very unequal struggle is taking place between the people and the

Government, and no end of abuses and injustices were committed with that end in view. The Maltese have so far claimed in vain to have their home rule. They have uselessly applied to the Imperial Government, through a deputation sent to London in 1899 with a view of protesting against the substitution of the English language to the Italian, and of obtaining political freedom to administer their own government, &c." The greater part of the letters, which are published in Appendix I., are received from parish-priests, the rest coming from clubs, schools, societies of various kinds, and other public bodies. One gentleman writes as follows:—"I am certain that the present awakening of the Maltese, exhausted in a thousand ways to the total benefit of the brilliant Utopia of Joe Chamberlain, is no slight comfort to you and to your incorruptible colleagues, because it is a most joyful promise of a better future; because it is a well-directed blow to the lean and malicious fox (of a race not altogether indigenous) who, from free men under free England, insidiously contrives and conspires to render us most miserable and vile slaves of powerful masters." Another writer, a parish priest, draws a heart-breaking picture of the poverty and destitution of his flock, and ends by recognizing that it is his duty to oppose to the utmost "the substitution of the English language to the Italian, which substitution in its ultimate analysis aims at the greater impoverishment of this loyal population." The president of a Philharmonic Society declares that they are ready "to fight to the last days of our lives and die like heroes," while the representative of another society speaks of Malta as "this unfortunate but invincible population." But the most vigorous sentiments and the hardest words are generally those of the priests, who appear to be the real supporters of the whole movement. It is a priest, too, who declares that if the Maltese submit to the English language "we should be the real assassins of our descendants."

"THE TABLET," 7TH SEPTEMBER 1901.

The Maltese language question has brought into prominence, in one or two newspapers, the names of Sir Gerald Strickland. Rightly or wrongly, he is supposed to be "the power behind the Pope" of the Colonial Office, and some of the local odium, on the one hand, and of the glory on the other, that is Mr. Chamberlain's, is transferred to him. Sir Gerald, with an equal mastery of his father's and his mother's languages, English and Italian, ought to be a tolerably impartial

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judge of the relative uses of both languages in Malta; while, on the question of policy, Sir Gerald is, of course, frankly an Imperialist. Nobody need be surprised by that; for since he was at Oxford, where his opinions were often made known in the Union debates, he has proclaimed his sentiments with a boldness which has not been exceeded by Mr. Chamberlain himself.

MALTA.

“DAILY GRAPHIC,” 7TH SEPTEMBER 1901.

Sir,—The writer of the two leaderettes in the “Daily Graphic” of the 28th of August is evidently correctly informed, and has put the case in a most concise and lucid manner. Not before it was time, either, as the numerous references to the agitators and questions in Parliament were, I think, leading uninformed people to think some injustice was being done by the Government. Generally speaking, the public at home know hardly anything about the island or islanders, but both are certainly worth more interest than they have hitherto taken in them. The island is interesting, and possesses a splendid winter climate. The Maltese see and know very little of us, except the naval and military element, which, always changing, mostly holds itself aloof from the natives, who, as a consequence, are rather shy and reserved, even when they can speak English. Now that English is to be taught as the official language, the natives will in future be able to read our newspapers, and will learn the history of this country and the Empire they are associated with and, knowing its common language, will have a career open to them in any part of it—a really important consideration for the inhabitants of a small island, which is about half the size of the Isle of Man and rather smaller than the Isle of Wight, but with three times the population of the former and two and a half times that of the latter, and now practically entirely a fortress.

You might do worse than send your artist-correspondent there, as you have to Jamaica, but with special instruction to look into the social and economic questions, or he will certainly forget them in the artistic and historic. Many of the houses of the wealthier Maltese are veritable museums.

Yours faithfully,

VERAX.

MALTA'S REQUIREMENTS.

Although over seventy-six thousand pounds was spent in 1900 on public works in Malta, the compiler of the annual Colonial report on Malta states that the expenditure was kept within the narrowest limits, and no important work of extraordinary nature was carried out, although many are urgently needed if Malta is to keep pace with the modern development of other civilised countries. Unless, however, additional revenue is authorised to provide funds for large works entailing extraordinary expenditure, the Government must put off indefinitely works such as the drainage of the villages, the extension of the water supply, the erection of a leper asylum for women, the building of a ward in the lunatic asylum for criminal lunatics—who, for want of space, are at present allowed to associate with other patients—the construction of a new hospital on modern sanitary principles to supersede the existing central hospital, which is both insanitary and inadequate to the population of the island, the construction of a breakwater at Gozo, the extension of electric light, the enlargement of schools to avoid overcrowding, and the building of new ones for accommodating about 5,000 children still awaiting admission; not to mention other works of public utility. Truly a long list.

On the other hand, the financial condition of Malta is prosperous. The taxation is low, and the island could well stand additional taxation for the purposes enumerated above.

“TIMES,” SEPT. 4, 1901

If the Maltese have few grievances under British rule they make the most of them. A capable and loyal people, they are in many respects model citizen of the Empire; and the murmurs which have come from them have been generally nothing more serious than are to be expected in a small community in which things are not easily seen in their true proportion, and in which violent language—what Dr. Fortunato Mizzi calls “the strong southern language”—against the authorities is always rewarded with a certain amount of popularity. Of late matters have taken a turn for the worse; and in consequence of the activity of a group of agitators, notably Dr. Fortunato Mizzi and Mr. Azzopardi, and a few ecclesiastical firebrands, they have reached a pass which has required the intervention amply justified by the Colonial Secretary's despatch published by us yesterday. One and all, the advocates of the so called

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grievances fail to take note of some elementary facts, the first being the fact that Malta is a great fortress which must be ruled more or less with regard to the safety and general needs of the Empire; that it is indebted mainly for its wealth—the vile foreign gold, some local patriots term it—to the large garrison kept there and to the British vessels of war which call or are stationed there. Another fact which Dr. Mizzi and his friends overlook is that they have no right to speak on behalf of the whole Maltese people. They represent a class, chiefly professional and official, not very large, but probably numerous enough, of persons who have long constituted a sort of aristocracy and oligarchy in the island, and who believe that they have a hereditary right to govern it. Many, no doubt, of the 180,000 Maltese who possess no political rights have interests opposed to those of Dr. Mizzi and the enemies of British rule. We do not approach the consideration of the alleged grievances from a reasonable point of view unless we understand how potent has been the influence of a middle-class oligarchy which has always ignored the interests of the poor, yet succeeds from time to time in securing popular support for its own ends by fanatical appeals to religious and racial prejudice. Though Mr. Chamberlain is willing to believe that “the absurd allegations” made by the ringleaders in the present agitation “find no credence with the hierarchy and the great majority of the priesthood,” it is impossible to overlook the fact that a considerable number of priests, even among the higher ranks of the clergy, have thrown themselves into the fray with a zeal for the so-called “pro-Italian” cause which it is hard to reconcile with the attitude of the Church towards genuine Italian causes on the neighbouring mainland of Italy.

For the last two or three years the chief grievance has been the policy of the Government in regard to the Italian language. The tongue spoken by the people is Maltese, based, as every one knows, on Arabic, though no doubt containing not a few Italian words. Long ago Italian came into use among the educated and wealthy; the schools being mostly controlled by the Italian priesthood, and the use of it has been in a sense the badge of superior social station. In view of the fact that a large part of the population was English, the compulsory employment of Italian in Courts of law was inconvenient; and from time to time there was a risk of a miscarriage of justice. That actually happened not long ago, when a British officer, Colonel Hewson, refusing to sign depositions written in Italian on the ground that he did

not understand the language, was committed by the Court for contempt. Thereupon Mr. Chamberlain announced the decision of the Government to make the English language optional in all the Courts, and to insist that summonses, warrants, &c., served on English-speaking persons should be written in English as well as Italian. An Order in Council made in 1899 gave British subjects not born or naturalized in Malta a right to use the English language in proceedings against them. This, however, was only a preliminary step. The mass of the people have in divers ways shown their sense of the value of instruction in English. Under the present scheme of education, parents have to choose, when their children reach the third standard, in what second language they will be taught. It is a matter altogether optional. There is no pressure brought to bear in favour of English. Now, in 1898, 1899, and 1900 97.8, 98.6, and 99.4 of the parents chose English. So far as there are means of ascertaining true popular sentiment, as distinguished from the opinion of a clique, it is in favour of English. Not from any action on the part of the Government, but owing to the operation of natural causes, and, in particular, the advantage which that language gives the Maltese in commerce, the study of it is becoming more and more popular. Dr. Mizzi and Mr. Zammit would wantonly arrest the culture in whose name they claim to speak. In these circumstances the Government came to the conclusion that the time was not far off when the English language might be definitely fixed upon as the language of the Courts; and they tentatively fixed upon a period of fifteen years, at the end of which, consistently with existing interests, the change should take place. No one denies that, if from any cause the knowledge of English is less common at that time than is now anticipated, the regulation will be modified. We should be sorry to see anything done in violence of the wishes as to this point of a people who have many claims on the good will of the Government. But a minority, however influential, must not be allowed to stand in the way of a language which in point of fact the Maltese prefer to Italian.

A graver difficulty has of late arisen. A small section complain that Malta is under military rule, and sometimes they talk of the “eternal slavery” to which they are subject. The island is not a self-governing colony; and the most ardent patriot scarcely suggests that it should receive representative institutions. That idea is out of the question. But the island possesses a complete civil administration, and, under the Constitution of 1887, the

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elected members of the Council have large powers, especially as to public expenditure. Indeed a majority of them may veto any such expenditure. This power has been used to bring about a deadlock. Improvements and public works urgently needed for the welfare and health of the people have been stopped because the elected members refuse to vote expenditure as long as they do not have their own way in regard to the official language. Of some of the works which have been suspended Mr. Chamberlain says that they are "called for by interests both Imperial and local, or are so essential to the general welfare of the population that to neglect them in a British colony and a civilized community would be a scandal which His Majesty's Government could not tolerate, especially as the elected members do not represent the population chiefly interested—namely, the poorest class who have no votes." To foil "the systematic policy of petty obstruction" which the elected members have espoused there is but one way—viz., to make use of the power of carrying out measures urgently needed by Orders in Council, and this course Mr. Chamberlain explains and justifies in the despatch which we published yesterday. We regret the necessity of the decision; we regret the presence of a spirit which cannot but be injurious to the interests of the island. That the Maltese may have wiser counsellors than those who claim to speak in their name is much to be desired. Let them study the legislation of some other European countries in regard to official languages, and they will be less critical than they are of what has lately been done by Great Britain.

"COURT JOURNAL," SEPT. 14, 1901.

Not content with the mischief they have done in South Africa, the anti-British party at home are trying to stir up strife over the Maltese question. Some days ago it was stated by one of those journals who have so warmly espoused the Boer cause that trouble was brewing for us in the Mediterranean; that Malta, irritated by the proposal to make English the official language and by the suggestion that opposition to this would result in the measure of self-government the people possess being withdrawn, was turning to France for sympathy if not aid; but there is no foundation for such a statement. The Maltese are perfectly content with British rule, and will remain so unless they are stirred up by the anti-British party at home. A few malcontents may demonstrate and make a fuss—such as, for instance, the recent disfiguring of a statue of her late Majesty—

but there is not a growing dislike to British rule, as we have been given to understand. As to turning to France for sympathy, that is one of the last things the Maltese would do. Their recollections of the French are too unpleasant for them to wish to do that. They hate France, and certainly not without cause, for the French when in Malta violated their temples and spoilt their churches.

THE MALTA QUESTION.

WHAT THE TROUBLE IS ABOUT.

"DAILY MAIL," 14TH SEPTEMBER 1901.

To understand the conflict at present going forward between the present British Government and a section of the population of Malta one must not lose sight of the local conditions prevailing in the Mediterranean naval and military base.

The total population of Malta, Gozo, and the other islands of the group forming the British colony is, roughly, 200,000, of whom about 15,000 are British troops. Of the remainder something like 150,000 or 160,000 belong to the industrial class and some 18,000 to 20,000 to the middle or professional class, while there is a small native order of nobility embracing twenty-nine families and their connections, numbering, perhaps, 1,500 persons in all.

The middle and noble classes speak Italian, and form the Clerical or Italian Party. The whole of the rest of the native population—nearly nine-tenths of the whole—speak their own Maltese dialect, a strange patois which is as great a mystery to philologists as is the origin of the people who speak it to ethnologists. It is probably derived from Carthaginian or Arabic source, and should be classed alongside with Hebrew among Semitic tongues, while the people who speak it are probably Punic in race.

From this it will be seen how little there is of Italy about either the bulk of the population or their language. But if these facts were not sufficiently striking, the following should certainly conclusively prove that the present agitation in favour of Italian is in no sense a "popular" movement.

A CASE OF "CONTEMPT."

Originally Italian was the official language of the island, for the simple reason that it was the language of the educated class and of the clerics. It was used exclusively in the legislature and in the administration of justice, and there is no doubt that its use in the courts of law gave rise to innume-

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rable cases of miscarriage of justice, for it was as much a foreign tongue to the vast majority of the suitors as it would be in Shoreditch County Court.

At last a crisis was reached when a few years ago a British officer, Colonel Hewson, was committed for contempt of court in not understanding Italian. So flagrant a case awoke the Home authorities to the injustice of perpetuating Italian as the official language, and in 1899 English was by Order in Council made alternative in legal proceedings dealing with alien-born English-speaking persons. This was the first small step towards remedying the evil.

Meantime, in the schools — Malta is blessed with an ideal system of primary education, by the way — all teaching is imparted for the first two years in the native Maltese tongue. After that period the parents have to choose whether their children shall learn, as an alternative language, Italian or English, both of which are taught by means of the native patois. No pressure is brought to bear on the parents in coming to a decision. Yet in 1898, 97.8 per cent. of them favoured English, in 1899 98.6 per cent. were of like mind, and in 1900 the proportion rose to 99.4.

THE REALLY POPULAR LANGUAGE.

That is to say, nine-tenths of the whole population, when making individually a voluntary choice between English and Italian, were as nearly as possible unanimous in favour of the former.

These figures were remarkable; they made it evident that, when the present childhood of the islands has grown up, the whole population, with negligible exceptions, will understand and speak the English tongue, while Italian will more than ever be a foreign language to them.

It would obviously, under these circumstances, have been a gross and cruel injustice to have continued to enforce Italian as the official language of the island. Consequently it was, by an Order in Council in 1899, decreed that after March 22nd, 1914, the official language of Malta should be English.

Such a decree was only a fitting interpretation of the voluntary expression of popular opinion as shown in the schools returns. But it did not at all suit the purposes of the small middle-class oligarchy. The strength and security of this class has long very largely rested on the fact that they speak the official tongue, and are thus raised above the level of the less educated bulk of the population. Italian is the polite language of Malta, the tongue of the upper classes. The "common people's" ignorance of it is the bulwark of the aristocracy, just as the popular igno-

rance of the Gallic tongue was the mainstay of the Norman barons in feudal times in our own land. To sweep away Italian as the official language of Malta and to substitute in its place a tongue intelligible to the whole population, is to wipe out the power of the Maltese upper class and to admit on a constitutional level with them the whole population.

A PARADOXICAL CONSTITUTION.

For Malta has a Constitution of its own, though a somewhat paradoxical one. At present 130,000 of the population of 180,000 are debarred by their ignorance of Italian from any participation in the Government of their country, and the whole administration is — as it is now seen — at the mercy of a small minority, the tyrannical aristocracy.

Malta is, of course, not a self-governing Colony, but on the other hand it has a share of autonomy not usually granted to Crown Colonies. It is primarily a naval and military base, after the style of the early Roman colonies. Its Government consists of a general officer, who is Governor and Commander-in-Chief — in the present instance Sir F. W. Grenfell. He is assisted by an Executive Council consisting of seven official and three unofficial (nominated) members, and by a Council of Government, consisting of six official and thirteen unofficial elected members.

Just as the House of Commons at home has sole authority over supplies and matters of public expenditure, so all similar affairs are in Malta in the sole power of the Council of Government, on the presumption that it is a representative body.

By the extension of the Constitution in 1887 the principle that there should be no taxation without representation was still further recognised, and it was decreed that a majority of the so-called popularly elected members of the Council of Government should have a veto on all proposals involving the expenditure of public funds.

Thus it is that at the present moment eight members of the upper classes can bring the whole public business of the Colony to a deadlock. And this is just what they have done. Enraged by the prospect of losing their unfair supremacy, the Italian party has revenged itself by bringing the whole affairs of Malta to a standstill. They refuse to sanction any public expenditure whatever or to vote any supplies at all.

MR. CHAMBERLAIN'S EXPEDIENT.

Fortunately, Malta is sufficiently a Crown Colony for it to be within the power of the home authorities through the Governor summarily to suspend the Constitution. To this step Mr. Chamberlain reluctantly had recourse to get out of the difficulty.

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This "high-handed tyranny" was sufficient excuse for the political agitators to raise a whirlwind of abuse in the Colony. Malta, it must be remembered, is like all southern countries, in being the very home of intrigue and agitation, and leaders of any seditious movement are never wanting.

A certain Dr. Fortunato Mizzi and a Mr. Azzopardi at once started an outcry against the Home Government. Curiously enough, they were ably seconded by the Clerical Party and the priesthood, who certainly as a rule are not sympathetic towards things Italian. But they have never forgotten nor forgiven the British Government's decision on the question of mixed marriages in 1896—a decision which was considered at the time an outrage to Rome.

The clergy not unnaturally carry with them in the agitation a very large section of the uneducated populace, and the result is a seemingly national protest, backed by apparently every class, and couched in the most passionate and heartfelt phraseology from the people of Malta.

Hence it is that we arrive at the Gilbertian position of the people of Malta supporting their oppressors against their deliverers, and opposing a reform which by their own voluntary choice they have shown to be absolutely necessary.

They are a hot-blooded, easily-moved people, and there can be little doubt that it would be a grave mistake to ignore their present temper. True as it is that their position is a hopelessly illogical one, into which they have been driven by the enthusiastic bombast of self-interested agitators, it is equally true that the situation is one which cannot be dismissed with a word. It is one which contains many grave elements of anxiety, and one which can only be surmounted by the utmost tact on the part of our Home Government.

CONCESSION TO MALTA.

EXTENSIONS OF FIVE YEARS FOR ITALIAN.

"DAILY MAIL" 10TH OCTOBER 1901.

We learn that the British Government, which has shown such scrupulous moderation in its new language regulations for Malta, has made a concession with regard to the period in which it was decreed that English would become the official language of the courts.

This period was originally fixed at fifteen

years from the present year. Discretion to extend the term to twenty years has been given to the Governor, in order to meet the case of the lawyers in present practice who speak Italian.

Apparently this mark of goodwill has not been locally appreciated by the Maltese.

A correspondent writes:—

"Within half-an-hour of his arrival on his return from London his Excellency the Governor, Sir F. Grenfell, summoned Mr. Mizzi, the leader of the Italian agitation, to the palace and informed him that for the reason stated the home authorities were willing to extend the period as already indicated.

"Mr. Mizzi was furious. He called it an insult to the Maltese, who, he said, were quite capable of learning English in fifteen years. He added that the Maltese were firm. English was not to be forced on the people, but that if the Government could really prove that 98 per cent. of the parents were in favour of English the agitation would cease.

"His Excellency explained that the taxation question would be replied to later on. It is understood that the Governor said that Mr. Mizzi was foolish in not listening to reason, and this is the opinion of all independent men.

"The authorities deserve every credit for the moderation they have shown in the matter."

MALTESE LANGUAGE QUESTION.

QUESTIONS IN PARLIAMENT.

Mr. P. O'Brien, on behalf of Mr. Boland, asked the Secretary for the Colonies whether his attention had been called to the petition presented on the 13th inst from the elected members of the Council of Government at Malta urging that a commission be appointed to inquire into the system of government in Malta, the language question, and the question of taxes; whether he was aware that a representative meeting had lately been held in Malta which expressed its condemnation of the despatch dated July 30; and whether a commission would be granted in accordance with the petition of the elected representatives of the Maltese people. In putting the question, the hon. member also asked the Colonial Secretary whether he had any information as to the hauling down of the British flag, or as to some indignity to the statue of her late Majesty, and, if so, whether he proposed to take any action.

Mr. Chamberlain—I have received no

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information as to either of the incidents, except what I have seen in the papers, nor have I received the petition mentioned in the question. As regards the second portion of Mr. Boland's question, the answer is in the affirmative, while as to the third portion the answer is in the negative. I do not propose to grant a commission of inquiry into the system of government at Malta.

Mr. Flynn—Is it intended to continue the government of Malta by Order in Council exclusively.

Mr. Chamberlain—When necessary, yes, sir.

1.0 Mr. Boland (Co. Kerry, S.) called attention to the action of the Colonial Secretary with regard to the language question in Malta. At the end of 15 years the English language was to be the only language in the Maltese law Courts. The Italian language suited the interests of the Maltese people far more than English, and their children ought, in the lower standards, to be taught Italian and be able to choose between English and Italian afterwards. The Colonial Secretary's action did not give them free choice. With regard to the war, he heard with the deepest regret a speech of the right hon. baronet on the front bench. (Hear, hear.)

Mr. Chamberlain said he was inclined to condole with the hon. member, who had raised a question of some importance at a time when it was impossible to do full justice to it. He did not think the hon. member was fully acquainted with the state of things. The language of the Maltese was a kind of Arabic; it was not a literary language, but a conversational language, and the Italian language was almost as foreign to them as Greek to the Irish. No one had thought of interfering with the Maltese language. But it was recognized that the people ought to learn some foreign language. The Government had given a free choice, and, until lately, 98 per cent. of the parents of children in the schools chose English. Even now, after great pressure had been brought to bear, 80 per cent. were in favour of English. They had made this choice because it was to their material advantage. In the old days the trade of the Maltese was with Italy; but the British occupation had raised the island to an extraordinary state of prosperity. The natives learnt English to make themselves useful to English employers. He honestly believed that he was meeting the wishes of the people.

The House was still sitting when we went to press.

Mr. MacNeill said he would like to hear what Mr. Egerton would reply and he should certainly believe the hon. member before Mr. Chamberlain.

THE LANGUAGE QUESTION IN MALTA.

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Mr. S. Buxton spoke in support of English as the Court language.

Mr. Labouchere moved a reduction of the vote by £4,000. The Committee divided on it; when there were for the reduction 57, against 137.

THE CONSTITUTION OF MALTA.

AUGUST 17, 1901.

Mr. Boland (Kerry, S.) asked the Secretary of State for the Colonies whether he was aware that the petition from the elected members of the Council of Government of Malta to the House of Commons was presented on the 13th inst., and that such petition was notified in the usual manner in the official report of the day's proceedings on the following day; whether he had since read the petition; and, whether, in view of the state of affairs in Malta at present, he was prepared to grant the commission prayed for.

Mr. Chamberlain (Birmingham, W.)—The petition to which the hon. member refers has been, I understand, presented to the House. I have not myself seen it, but that is of no consequence, because I am fully acquainted with the arguments used by the elected members, all of which are printed in the Blue-book which has been laid upon the table. There is no necessity therefore for any commission of inquiry into the circumstances. But I ought to add that under no circumstances whatever would his Majesty's Government consent to give greater power to the so-called elected members who represent, I believe, only something like 2 per cent., of the population of Malta. In fact, having

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regard to the way in which the powers already conferred upon them have been abused, it may be a matter for subsequent consideration whether we should not go back to the Constitution of Malta as it existed before 1887, and under which the Maltese enjoyed full liberty and prosperity.

THE MALTA BREAKWATER SCHEME.

Viscount Sidmouth asked the First Lord of the Admiralty whether the scheme of a breakwater on the Monarch Shoal near the entrance of Malta Harbour, the subject of a recent debate in the Council of Government in that island, had been approved by his Majesty's Government and was intended to be adopted; whether a report of that debate could be laid upon the table; and whether the improvement of the quarantine harbour for the accommodation of shipping was in contemplation.

The Earl of Selborne said the Government had decided that the large requirements of the Fleet at Malta necessitated the construction of a breakwater on the Monarch Shoal, which should not only provide the accommodation which the Fleet now required but should render Malta safe from attack by torpedo-boats. One million sterling was the estimated total cost, and that sum was provided for in the Naval Works Loan Bill which was now before the House of Commons. If the House of Commons were prepared to vote the money the breakwater would be constructed. As regarded the quarantine harbour he was aware of its potential value, but the Government did not consider that it was necessary at the present time to propose any works in connection with that harbour from that particular point of view. He was not aware that the Colonial Government had any scheme in contemplation in that respect. As regarded the debate referred to, the Admiralty had not a report of what took place, nor had the Colonial Office.

MALTA AND THE ITALIANS.

“EGYPTIAN GAZETTE.”

If the almost hysterical interest manifested at the present moment by a portion of the Italian Press in Maltese affairs were a solitary instance, we might well be surprised at such far-reaching and impertinent activity; but Malta is by no means the first field in

which the Irredentist party has intrigued to win over to Italy adjacent territories. The Italia Irredenta party is now represented by the society calling itself the Dante Alighieri, which is carrying out the same policy in trying to replace national dialects by the Italian language; their real object being, not educational, but political. It aims apparently at the re-establishment of the Roman Empire. Albania and Candia would appear to be outside any boundaries which sober state-manship would really claim for an extended map of Italy, yet Italian schools have been established in both places to give the native populations gratuitous instruction in Italian, but neither of these peoples would ever consent to annexation to Italy or to any other European Government, with the exception of Candia, which naturally desires to be joined to Greece. The present agitation in Malta is evidently connected with the action of the Società Dante Alighieri, and for that reason attracts the sympathy of the generality of Italians; but the *Gazzetta di Venezia* (23rd August 1901), in criticising the allusion to Malta in Signor Boselli's (Deputy for Savona) speech on Venice, justly remarks “We are persuaded that all the speechifying on this question, which will doubtless still continue for some time, is most prejudicial to the Maltese themselves, and what is more, may create for us misunderstandings and difficulties with our friends beyond the Channel, thus playing the game of our unfriendly neighbours on the other side of the Alps. We must not forget that the Maltese question is a purely local one, as the inhabitants of that island have not the most distant leaning towards Irredentism.” It is notorious that similar agitation is now, or has been lately, going on in Switzerland, in the Canton of Ticino and in Austria, in Trent, Trieste, and Dalmatia. The present agitation in Malta may reasonably be imputed to the Società Dante Alighieri and is evidently political, an attempt to prepare the island for cession by England to Italy, trusting to the precedent of the Ionian Islands. Nothing could be more prejudicial to the interests of the Maltese people, who are dependent upon the large sums remitted by the English Government for the maintenance of the military and naval forces in Malta, a sum approaching one million and a half sterling a year, distributed among a population of only 180,000 souls. Besides this, the British Government is now contemplating the expenditure of more than another million for the extraordinary expenses of a breakwater and other works. The island also profits by the large sums spent by the military and naval officers, their families, the resident English colony, and winter visitors.

THE LANGUAGE QUESTION IN MALTA.

For an unbiassed and clear statement of the Maltese question we refer our readers to Mr. Eltzbacher's excellent article in the *Contemporary Review* for August. The writer deals with facts and not sentiments, and by means of simple statistics demolishes the absurdly violent accusations brought against the British Government by the small clique of pro-Italian Maltese intriguers, accusations which he summarises as follows :

1. That the English language is brutally forced upon an unwilling population.

2. That the Maltese are impoverished and ground down with exorbitant taxation.

The statistics quoted by Mr. Eltzbacher show that in 1900, 99% of the population of Malta and 97% of that of Gozo elected to learn English in the higher classes of the voluntary elementary schools, in which it is left wholly to the option of the parents whether Italian or English shall be taught to their children. An overwhelming majority of these children speak nothing but Maltese, a dialect of Arabic, in which a few Greek and Italian words may be found. Mr. Eltzbacher writes—The vast majority of the inhabitants of Malta, 180,000 in number, speak Maltese, and Maltese only. The group second in numerical strength is the English community, composed of the personnel of the garrison, the fleet and the civilian English residents, numbering more than 25,000; the Italians and the Italian-speaking Maltese number only about 5,000 and have, so far, imposed their language upon 180,000 Maltese and 25,000 Englishmen. How very small the number of the Italian-speaking Maltese is may be seen from the fact that their exceedingly well-written organ, the *Gazzetta di Malta*, which is probably read by every pro-Italian Maltese as a patriotic duty, has a circulation of 750 copies according official statistics. From private enquiries, however, it would appear that this figure is far too high and that in reality the circulation of the organ of anti-British Propaganda does not even reach 300 copies!! It cannot be considered a hardship for the very small Italian-speaking minority who may at present be only slightly acquainted with English, to be told that in fifteen years' time they will have to speak the language of the ruling Power, which ought to have been made the official language of the country from the beginning.

Dealing with the second charge,—unjust and exorbitant expenditure,—Mr. Eltzbacher, besides calling attention to the prosperity of the island, shown in so many striking ways, points out that of the total yearly revenue, which in 1899 amounted to £354,265, £262,000 is applied to charitable

institutions, public works, police, schools, post-office, public health, etc. etc. The Imperial Government contributes £42,000 per annum to the Malta Militia, towards which the island only pays £5,000. Our last quotation from Mr. Eltzbacher is perhaps the most striking and worthy of the italics in which he prints the words—“*There are no taxes whatever in Malta.*” It is difficult to suppose that the noisy minority, encouraged by the Italian press, will succeed in forming a party influential enough to cause serious trouble. They may find sentimentalists in Italy, or even in England, foolish enough to espouse their cause; but that the bulk of the Maltese should desire to incur the obvious economical disadvantages of a union with Italy seems out of the question. Were England by any possibility to consent to the cession of the island, the consequences would be most disastrous to the Maltese. Under the English Government the population has immensely increased while the island only produces three months' supply of food; the balance has to be provided by the gold and silver annually remitted from England for the use of the garrison, and without this the people would starve. The Maltese labourers have only to compare their own condition with that of the agricultural population of Sicily, which is steeped in the deepest misery and lawlessness.

THE LANGUAGE QUESTION IN MALTA.

“CATHOLIC TIMES,” 21ST OCTOBER, 1901.

From information which reaches me I learn that the agitation with regard to the language question in Malta continues, and very angry speeches are delivered at public meetings.

MALTA LANGUAGE QUESTION

“TELEGRAPH,” 21ST OCTOBER, 1901.

According to private news received here, the question of the official language of Malta is about to be satisfactorily solved. It appears that the whole matter has been inflated by a certain section of people merely to oppose Mr. Chamberlain and the English Cabinet. The Governor of Malta, it seems, has proposed to maintain Italian as the official language in the law courts, but to give the preference to English in the schools. The Maltese persist in trying to have Italian supreme in all

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departments, but it is foreseen that they will meet the British Governor half-way, thus ending an agitation which had found sympathisers both in Italy and France.

“TIMES,” 27TH AUGUST. 1901.

We print elsewhere a short summary of a rather lengthy document purporting to be addressed to the English nation by the people of Malta. There is no need to recapitulate here the history of the facts which have led to the language question in Malta; they have already been fully set out and commented upon in our columns, and this last manifesto adds nothing to the arguments which may be advanced on either side. Nevertheless this appeal, as the manifesto is called, deserves some attention, chiefly because it is not what it purports to be. It is not the people, the great bulk of the population, who are in any way concerned in maintaining the use of Italian as the only official language; the retention of Italian affects only those who speak it—a limited upper class which hardly count in their number a tenth part of the inhabitants of the island. The real language of the people of Malta is, as every one knows, a mixed patois which has almost as little affinity with Italian as it has with English; and in the case of the great majority of the people it is the only language that they can speak. Some official language was necessary, and hitherto that official language has been Italian. It is unnecessary to restate the reasons which have led to the decision to substitute English for Italian, but not the least cogent of them is the fact that the trend of Maltese education is in the direction of the English language and not the Italian. In choosing what foreign language their children shall learn in the elementary schools the Maltese parents have been almost unanimous in showing a preference for English. The broad facts of the case may, then, be summed up thus:—Malta has a population of which some nine-tenths speak the island patois and are rapidly learning English by their own desire, and one-tenth speaks Italian and sufficient of the patois to influence the other portion; which, then, would be the best language for the official use of the ruling class? The answer is pretty clear. It would immensely benefit the most numerous, and at present chiefly uneducated, class of the community to have English as the official tongue; while the loss of Italian must prejudice the peculiar position which is at present enjoyed by the very small educated minority.

Naturally the class which lays claim to social superiority in Malta could hardly be

expected not to resent a reform—for it is a reform, and a very beneficial reform for the population at large—which must rob them of one of the chief factors in their ascendancy over their fellow-countrymen. They have resented it, and the appeal which they kindly put into the mouths of their illiterate fellow-countrymen who do not speak Italian, and, apparently, do not wish to speak it, is the very natural outcome of this resentment. Whether they do well to be angry or not is quite another question; but they are angry with a recklessness which borders somewhat upon the ridiculous. They have gone back to ancient history for reproaches to cast against this country. What is England, they ask, that she should play the tyrant? She never conquered Malta, with its “unfortunate but invincible population,” as one writer calls them; she is merely there by invitation; one wonders that they do not say “on sufferance” as well. Another indignant supporter of the Italian language, who says that the Maltese have been drained dry for the sole benefit of Mr. Chamberlain, rejoices most uncivilly because he thinks that the agitation in which he is taking part “will be a well-directed blow to the lean and malicious fox.” Other compliments, not less picturesque or more courteous, are levelled at the Governor of Malta; but Governors and Colonial Secretaries are the natural targets for such shafts. Perhaps the happiest expression of all is that of a parish priest, who exclaims that the question of the language is one of life or death to the country, and that the Maltese who do not oppose the English language will be “the real assassins of their descendants.”

It is not a little curious that the parish priest should play so prominent a part in this movement. The greater part of the letters which are published in this appeal, declaring the writers' adherence to the objects of the agitation, are signed by the clergy, though there is no obvious reason why the clerical interests should be affected more than any other. It is possible, however, that by going a little way back in the recent history of Malta one may find an explanation, not only of the intrusion of the priesthood, but also of the passion which has been imported into the question. In the summer of 1896 Malta was a prey to an agitation similar to the one which is provoking so many bombastic speeches and shedding so much ink to-day. Then, as now, the population held its mass meetings and passed heated resolutions commanding this country to surrender instantly to the Maltese will. Then it was the vexed question of mixed marriages which disturbed our friendly relations. Of the merits of that question, or rather

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of the Maltese view of it, there is no reason to speak now. It is sufficient to say that the final decision of the British Government was considered at the time a grievance, not only by the Maltese clergy, but also by the Holy See. There are some injuries which the clerical mind seems incapable of forgetting or forgiving, and, though one is unwilling to use the word rancour, it is the only one which fully expresses the sentiments entertained in clerical quarters towards the Colonial Office in this country. The Colonial Office was forced, not only by counsels of expediency, but even by the exigencies of the case, to run counter to the law as it was laid down in Rome, and has consequently incurred an enmity which is untiring, though it may not be formidable. To this feeling must undoubtedly, we fear, be added the general hostility towards this country exhibited in the pages of the Vatican Press during the early days of the War in South Africa, and it is more than probable that we shall then have found an explanation of the clerical fire which is now helping to warm Maltese enthusiasm over the language question.

MALTESE GRIEVANCES.

"REVIEW OF REVIEWS."

Mr. O. Eltzbacher writes an article upon "Maltese Grievances," which may be summed up in one line—that there are none. He maintains that the agitation against our recent Colonial Office policy in Malta is entirely due to a small fraction of Italians who are in no sense representative of the majority of the population. Some of his figures are very remarkable. He says, out of a population of 205,000, the Italian-speaking Maltese only number 5,000. There are 25,000 English residents, and 180,000 Maltese who speak Maltese, which is more like Arabic than Italian. The difference between Maltese and Italian he illustrates by putting side by side the two first clauses of the Lord's Prayer in the two languages:—

ITALIAN.

9. Padre nostro, che sei ne' cieli sia santificato il tuo Nome.

10. Il tuo Regno venga. La tua volontà sia fatta in terra come in cielo.

MALTESE.

9. Missierna li inti fis-smeuiet, Jitkaddes ismeec.

10. Tigi saltnatec Icu n li trid int, chif fis-senna becca fl'art

He says that there are no direct taxes in Malta, and that of indirect taxes the Maltese only pay 10s. a year per head, and all the money is spent on the local administration. The Maltese are very prosperous, and from a million to a million and a half of money every

year is spent in the island by the English. "To withdraw from Malta would mean the immediate impoverishment of the island and the rapid emigration of the majority of its congested population." But why discuss this question? Apart from Imperial necessity, which could compel us to remain in Malta, we are certainly not going to withdraw from any place where a plebiscite of the population would ask us to remain, and if Mr. Eltzbacher be correct, the continuance of the British Government in Malta would be voted by a majority of at least nine to one.

THE MALTESE QUESTIONS.

"MORNING POST," AUG. 19, 1901.

Twice in the House of Commons on Saturday Mr. Chamberlain had to explain that the lawlessness of an insignificant portion of the population of Malta could not be allowed to have its own way. In both cases the interlocutor was Mr. Boland, who was singularly persistent. It appears that a petition has been presented by certain elected members of the Council of Government, of Malta in regard to the future use of the English language in the island, and to the refusal of the elected members to vote the necessary financial supplies until this regulation has been withdrawn. It is well that the matter should be properly understood in this country and in order that this may be the case it is necessary to start about a century ago. It was in 1798, just before the battle of the Nile, and just after the British navy had reentered the Mediterranean, that Malta was pusillanimously surrendered to the French under an agreement in which, no one doubts, the degenerate Knights Hospitallers found their own reward. The Maltese objected to this agreement, however, and with a British squadron in command of the sea, the French garrison, which had no chance of success, surrendered in 1800. Great Britain has held the island—or group of islands—ever since, and the possession was secured to her by the Treaty of Paris in 1814. Probably no other Power would have retained a Crown Colony for more than a century without insisting on the use of its own language in legal proceedings. Great Britain has been far too lenient in this respect and has tolerated the employment of a language which is not only not its own, but is not even that of the majority of the inhabitants of the islands. There are some families of a certain social standing who took refuge in the island from various parts of Southern Europe, and who in their

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social intercourse ordinarily talk Italian. It is not too much to say that they can all speak English, and that they do speak English when they are brought into contact with Englishmen. The working classes are of Carthaginian stock with an admixture of the various races by which Malta has been acquired time after time. Phœnicia and Greece, Rome and Byzantium have alike contributed to the fusion of race: so have the Saracens and Sicily, and the Empire by which it was granted to the Knights of St. John. The native language is mainly a perverted Arabic with a certain admixture of Phœnician and other words—or rather words derived from Phœnician and other roots. About 20 per cent. of it is Italian. The probability is that the average Maltese boatman who plies across the Grand Harbour can talk a certain amount of a dialect which passes for Italian, but this is unknown among the tillers of the soil. In a word, Italian is in no sense the language of the people. It is the language of an exotic few; but it has hitherto been the language of the courts. Several unpleasant incidents occurred in consequence of Englishmen not being able to comprehend legal procedure, and the matter culminated in 1898, when Colonel Hewson was committed for contempt of court because he refused to sign a deposition drawn up in a language he did not understand. The result was that the British Government was compelled to intervene, and to decree that a time should be fixed when the language of a small clique would cease to be the language of the courts, and when it would be necessary to use English. Fifteen years from the 22nd of March, 1899, was the time fixed, and one might have thought that it allowed a liberal margin. It is noticeable, moreover, that parents in the Maltese islands, whose children are originally taught in the vernacular, almost invariably choose English and not Italian as the second language those children have to learn. The small clique appealed to the ignorance and bigotry of the few voters, however, and persuaded them that the religious faith of the people was in danger of attack. Of course, there was no justification for such a statement, but it served its purpose. Then came the refusal of the elected members of the council to vote supplies, followed by the necessary Order in Council that taxation to meet certain urgent and necessary public improvements is to be enforced. Many proposals have been suggested, but the welfare of the community cannot be allowed to suffer in order that a few people who prefer to speak Italian in their home life instead of English should be permitted to sulk. The worst charge that can be brought against

Great Britain in the matter is that it did not insist fifty years ago that English should be the official language of the islands, and the only result of a fictitious agitation will be to hasten the day when it will become so.

LANGUAGE QUESTION IN MALTA.

“NEW YORK TIMES,” 25TH AUGUST, 1901.

To what extent the feeling of the Italian-speaking inhabitants of Malta has been aroused by the attempt of the British Government to make English the official language of the island may be gathered from the following extract translated from *Il Patriota Democratico* of Valetta: “The foreigner, with a hypocrisy quite diabolical, tries to make us pass for so many idiots in saying that the substitution of English for the Italian language will bind closer the ties between English and Maltese. No, it is not true, and, moreover, it is impossible. The English and the Maltese can never understand each other, owing to differences of race, religion, of customs.”

The practical pros and cons of the question have just been made public by the publication of a Government Blue Book covering the period of dispute from May 28, 1898, until June 30 of the present year. It seems that before the establishment of the present public school system the Italian language, being used in the clerical schools, became the official language of the civil Government of the island and the badge of superior social station: The Maltese language, in the natural course of things, became filled with Italian words through sheer necessity. This point is brought out in a communication from the Maltese Council of Government sent to the British Colonial Office:

“The Maltese dialect, after a slow evolution of nine centuries, is now so full of Italian words that it is easy to teach our children the Italian tongue, and so to bring within reach of the people the benefits of the latest science and noblest literature. If English is substituted, education will suffer, as it is much more difficult for the Maltese to learn English than Italian: indeed, all those classes that necessarily stop their literary education at a very early period will learn very little or nothing.”

With the establishment of the public school system Italian and English became optional, with the result that in 1898, 1899, 1900 97.8, 98.6, and 99.4 of the parents chose

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English, and consequently many students insisted as British subjects on being heard in the English language before the Council or in the Courts. In every case they were condemned for contempt. In February, 1898, Colonel J. L. Hewson, an officer in the Army Pay Department at Malta, was committed by a Maltese court of law for contempt of court because he refused to sign a deposition in a language with which he was unacquainted. Legislative action was accordingly taken by an order in Council of March 7, 1899, for the purpose of removing the injustice of a British subject unfamiliar with Italian "being tried by a court in a British colony in a language which he could not understand," and of affording him certain facilities for the conduct of civil proceedings in the English language.

The Blue Book in question shows that, having failed in their efforts to force the Italian language on the majority, the opponents of free choice next announced as their policy the refusal of all taxation and public improvements till they had secured their ends. To meet this contingency the Government advised his Majesty to pass by order in Council the legislation required for dealing with the question.

THE MALTESE AGITATION.

"MORNING POST," DECEMBER 9, 1901.

With reference to our leading article of the 5th inst., on Maltese malcontents, "A Wellwisher to Malta," who was upwards of three years there as an officer and took an interest in the affairs of the island, writes as follows:

"Perhaps you will kindly allow me, one of the Chief Secretary's (Sir Gerald Strickland) ancient official antagonists to say that he is an exceedingly able, upright, and enlightened public servant, and is devoted heart and soul to the interests of the island. He is disliked by certain classes because he stands for progress and purity in the public service, while they desire the old order to remain. I think what follows may throw a light on the motives of those who are engineering the present agitation. Before I was many weeks in Malta it was borne in on me that there must have been some influence adverse to the English language at work to account for the slight progress it had made among the people though we had been in occupation of the island for nearly a century. To gratify my curiosity I devoted a good deal of my leisure time to the work of finding out what the influence was. I ascertained that there was

no tax, direct or indirect, on property or income, and that the poorer classes contributed very much more than their fair share to the revenue, which is chiefly raised from duties on imports. Bread, for instance, is the staple article of diet of the masses, and wheat is subject to a duty of 10s. per quarter. Members of the moneyed and propertied classes told me frankly that they were opposed to general introduction of English among the people, as they would agitate for a revision of taxation if they could read English newspapers. The Church also objected, as it owned about one third of the property (untaxed) in the island, and on the further ground that if the people became Anglicised the power of the priesthood might be lessened. Most of the civil servants and the entire legal and medical professions were also averse from the spread of English, as they were afraid that candidates from this country might compete for appointments and practice. So strong was the feeling on the subject that a distinguished Maltese judge, on being asked if he would become a member of a proposed Civil Service Club, replied: 'Only if English is forbidden to be spoken in it.'

IGNORANCE AND CREDULITY.

"The classes were thus opposed to the only measure that could lead to the amelioration of the lot of the common people, or by which the not far distant problem of over-population in Malta could be solved satisfactorily. The Maltese masses are ignorant and credulous to an almost inconceivable degree and if an agitator layman or cleric, starts a lie about a Government proposal, however beneficent its effects might be if carried into force, they believe it and agitate against the measure. Commissioner Rowsell's report (1876 I think) furnishes a very good illustration of how easily the Maltese people can be influenced against their own interests. Mr. Rowsell proposed to reduce the duty on wheat from 10s. to 5s. per quarter in order to lower the price of bread. Agitators incited the people to resist the proposal, riots ensued, and the measure had to be abandoned. I asked one of the gentlemen who led in that agitation to tell me the arguments by which he had induced the people to oppose what was obviously for their own good. He replied in effect that he told them, 'If the duty was reduced the price of wheat would go up in much greater proportion, and that once the cost of that article was raised it never fall again' and much more in the same strain. The incident shows how easily the lower classes in Malta can be misled, and the worst is we can never place a matter in its true light before them as we do not know their

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language and they do not understand ours. The most serious question that await the Administration in Malta is that of over-population. The inhabitants now number about one hundred and eighty thousand, and they are increasing at the rate of over two thousand per annum. The entire resources of the island—agriculture, trade, shipping, &c.—cannot support more than one hundred and twenty-five thousand of these. The balance derive their living, either directly or indirectly, from the expenditure on the fleet, dockyard, troops, and naval military works. It is obvious that a time is approaching when the works will be completed, and the only outlay on them will be for repairs. There will then be a considerable reduction in the wages bill. With an ever-increasing population, resources incapable of expansion, and a decrease in the amount paid in wages, thousands will be in a condition of destitution if precautionary measures are not taken in time. The natural outlet for the surplus would be by way of emigration, but there is no hope of success for Maltese immigrants in British colonies unless they have a fair knowledge of the language spoken in them. No more than five per cent., of the inhabitants, however, understand English sufficiently to make themselves understood in it, and these are not the people who would emigrate, as their knowledge of our language enables them to find employment at home. The need for action is therefore pressing. Some of those with whom I discussed the question told me that there was room for the surplus in Tunis, Tripoli, and other places on the North African border. I took some trouble to test the truth of this statement, and the replies to my inquiries led me to the conclusion that the localities referred to have received as many Maltese immigrants as they can absorb. Even if it were not so, however, it would be pure waste of splendid material to allow such good workmen and clever artisans, as so many of them are, to drift to foreign countries when our own colonies require them."

THE ENGLISH LANGUAGE WANTED.

"They only need a knowledge of the English language and some instruction in technical schools relatives to the new conditions under which they would have to work to enable them to take their places in any colony on equal terms with the best class of immigrants from other countries. With regard to Italian it is merely the language of a clique, and is as little understood by the lower classes as English is. Its retention is defended by those who think that their private interests would suffer if any improvement was made in the status of the poor. The irony of the

situation is that by misrepresentation agitators are able to induce these very people to resist everything in the way of legislation that would benefit them. More than one rich man in Malta said to me: 'God made the masses as they are; if He had intended them to be better off He would not have made them so, and why should we interfere with His designs?' It is only fair to say that I found the better class Maltese most courteous in argument, and their most strenuous agitator was one of the most reasonable men I ever met. Their retrograde ideas and prejudices are the outcome of their insular position, but I doubt if they are one whit more backward in this respect than were many of the corresponding class in this country half a century ago, and the fault does not rest altogether with them. The lower classes are orderly and well behaved, and I always found that they responded with interest to a smile and a kind word. We completely misunderstand each other's motives, and this will continue till we can interchange ideas in a language common to both. When that time comes the agitator's business will have ceased to pay."

MALTA AND LIBERTY OF LANGUAGE.

"TABLET" 28th DECEMBER

We drew attention a few weeks ago to the results of the recent census in Malta, and to the flood of light which it shed upon the thoroughly artificial nature of the language agitation in the island. The bottom facts of the situation are these—that the overwhelming majority of the people speak Maltese as their mother tongue; that Maltese is a corrupt form of the Arabic, and is probably the nearest approach in the modern world to the language of the ancient Carthaginians; and that about twelve per cent. of the islanders talk Italian. To describe as national movement an agitation in favour of retaining Italian as an official language of the courts and school is certainly tolerably audacious. The unreasonableness of the agitation becomes even more apparent if we have regard not merely to present facts but also to the clearly marked trend of the language movement in the island. If we exclude children under five years the total population of the island—that is born in Malta or of Maltese parentage—is 157,747. Of these 21,027 speak Italian and 18,922 speak English. If we compare these figures with the corresponding figures for 1891 we find that the number of Maltese who can speak Italian has increased by 16.18 per cent., while the number of those

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who can speak English has increased in the same period by no less than 39·09 per cent. If we extend our inquiry so as to ascertain which of these two foreign languages is predominantly spoken, not merely by the native population but by the residents in the island, we find that while 22,954 persons speak Italian, more than twice the number—43,210—speak English. These figures naturally include the naval and military establishments of the island. That under these circumstances the British Government should have decided to put an end to the compulsory teaching of Italian in the schools whether primary or secondary, was almost inevitable. Mr. Chamberlain's justification is written large across the pages of the census returns.

There is nothing arbitrary about the new scholastic regulations. They simply stand for the liberty of the Maltese parent to choose for his children Italian or English as a secondary language. Until recently the unfortunate Maltese children were forced to know, or attempt to know, three languages—their own, Italian and English. In future they will be taught exclusively in Maltese for the first two years, and then at the option of their parents either Italian or English. The group of agitators who want to force Italian upon the Maltese against their will are straining every nerve, and even refusing supplies, to get rid of this unwelcome liberty for the parent. Their apprehension that the Maltese parents if left to themselves will prefer English to Italian is born out by the school statistics of the past year, which show that nearly 99 per cent. have decided in favour of English. Happily this movement of emancipation from the tyranny of Italian has been carried further, and Article 4 of the last *Maltese Government Gazette* is hailed by all enlightened friends of education as the Magna Charta of the secondary schools of Malta. "The parents or guardians of any student who is a candidate for admission to the Lyceum or University shall have the option of determining whether that student shall be examined in English or in Italian, or in both English and Italian, and no student shall be disqualified from obtaining any scholastic or university preferment or degree, or from obtaining admission to the University or Lyceum, or promotion from a lower to a higher class therein if he satisfies the examiners in either English or Italian." That sentence sets the people of Malta free from the bondage of Italian, and gives them liberty of choice. A later local regulation provides that in the event of students of the University presenting themselves for examination in both languages—English and Italian—they shall receive marks only for the lan-

guage in which they acquit themselves best. The object of this rule is to strike at the old bad tradition, and to avoid all appearance of encouragement to the former *pari passu* system, which consisted of an endeavour to teach the children concurrently two foreign languages, Italian and English, even though it was admittedly impossible to use as a medium of instruction the only language they really understood, viz., Maltese. This ridiculous system has been the curse of education in Malta ever since it was introduced. In the secondary schools nothing but a miserable smattering of the two alien languages was ever acquired, except by a few industrious genuises, while in the primary schools, as might be expected, the children left school knowing as much Maltese as they took with them, and particularly nothing else. It cannot be too clearly understood that the agitation against the abolition of the compulsory *pari passu* system is in no sense a popular movement. Why should the people object to a regulation which lets parents decide for themselves whether their children shall be taught English or Italian or both? The Italian section of the Maltese population is strongly represented among the most articulate classes, and possesses almost a monopoly of the Press and the Bar of the island, and hence the outcry. The Maltese majority is not likely to complain of legislation which gives them nothing but educational freedom.

In all the essentials we believe the policy initiated by Mr. Chamberlain and Sir Gerald Strickland to be not only just, but beneficial to the highest interests of the island. Writing on the question last August we took exception to the announcement that fifteen years hence English would be made the language of the courts. This seemed to us a gratuitous and needless provocation. "Why", we asked "proclaim that Italian will be suppressed at the end of fifteen years when you cannot have the slightest idea what will be the relative positions of the two languages when the period arrives? That there should be liberty to use either English or Italian, just as there is liberty to use French or English in Canada, and Dutch or English at the Cape, is reasonable; but this threat to suppress the use of Italian half a generation hence is to court the maximum of resistance for the minimum of good". The justice of this criticism has so far been recognised that the Colonial Secretary has intimated his readiness to extend the time limit for Italian to twenty years for the convenience of advocates, notaries, and solicitors now carrying on their work in Italian. We venture to say that, if the new educational rules are adhered to, long before twenty years are over the necessity for allowing English in the courts will have become self-evident. To

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announce changes which are not to come into force for another generation was, however, surely unnecessary. On other points Mr. Chamberlain must be given credit for having done all that was possible to conciliate opinion and to smooth over racial prejudices. He has anticipated the objection that his real object in encouraging the English language in Malta was to provide lucrative posts for English immigrants, who would thus take the bread out of the mouths of the Maltese, by stating in "The Gazette" that no person will be eligible for a judicial or magisterial post in the island who is not a graduate of the University of Malta. Mr. Chamberlain has also been well and wisely advised in deciding that the theological course should be unchanged and given as before in either Latin or Italian. In our judgment the recent action of the Home Government has been in the best interests of the overwhelming majority of the people of Malta.

MR. CHAMBERLAIN'S SPEECH AT THE HOUSE OF COMMONS.

"TIMES," TUESDAY, JANUARY 28TH.

8.30. On the return of the Speaker after the usual interval.

Mr. Boland (Kerry, S.) rose to move as an amendment to the address:—"But we humbly represent to your Majesty that the people of Malta have been restrained from exercising the right to hold public meetings, in which the proposed substitution of English for the Italian language in the law Courts after a specified term of years and the increase of taxation were to be discussed; and represent to your Majesty that the abrogation of the aforesaid ordinance and the restoration of complete civic rights are essential to the re-establishment of the peaceful conditions formerly existing in that portion of your Majesty's dominions." In support of his amendment the hon. member, who said he spent a few weeks in the island about two years ago and had since been in communication with friends there, complained of the action of the Executive in recently proclaiming a public meeting, and also of that of the Under-Secretary for the Colonies in refusing to listen to a deputation from the elected council, this, he submitted, constituting a new feature in the Maltese language question. With regard to the religious aspect of this question, it was a serious matter that the Maltese clergy should now have come forward to urge claims which hitherto they had not been very prominent in putting forward.

9.0. He quoted a petition to the King

against the substitution of English for Italian, which was said to be indispensable to the people and was bound up with the social and individual interests of the Maltese. It was said that the people themselves had elected for the English language; but his contention was that a fair choice had not been offered to the people of Malta. The language ordinance was brought forward in 1899, stating that at the end of 15 years the English language was to be substituted for Italian in the Courts of law. The passing of that ordinance was in itself a coercive measure, which had a reflex action on the minds of parents who were asked to choose between two languages. It was not fair to say that those who wanted Italian were only the lawyers and others to whom the language was of professional advantage. Behind the substitution of English for Italian in the Courts of law the people of Malta were necessarily faced with the prospect that in the Courts English barristers and others speaking English would inevitably have an effect on the judicial system of their country. Canon law was the foundation of the law system in Malta; but in the future, if the ordinance was persisted with, a demand would arise from this country that the system of English law should be substituted for the canon law. The Maltese people had always been loyal to the English Crown, and he maintained that the Maltese people had a right to maintain their own language. The necessity of Italian to them was economic as well as sentimental. Malta was quite close to Italy; it carried on a trade with Sicily, Greece, and Tunis; and for the commercial advantages of Malta it was necessary that Italian should be maintained as the language of the country. Let the children be taught English as an extra accomplishment, but do not drive Italian out. The national sentiment in Malta had been growing the more the Government had been trying to substitute the English language. Every member of the council was returned on the understanding that he would support the keeping up of the Italian language; and three Orders in Council had now been passed against the wishes of the elected members of the council. In no part of the British Empire was there a state of things comparable to this. Since last July the situation had gone from bad to worse. It was a serious development that the Archbishop and clergy had been forced into the controversy by the disregard of the wishes of the people. In a despatch of last July the Colonial Secretary commented on the fact that the Archbishop and the majority of the clergy did not support the agitation; but now they had been compelled to make their voices heard. The

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last thing to attempt to day in any part of the British Empire was to introduce a spark of religious animosity. He feared that this last ordinance showed a disposition to Anglicize the Maltese, who could never be Englishmen on the ordinary lines. They should be allowed to continue in their own national ways; and any attempt in the contrary direction would be not only a failure but a lasting stain on the colonial history of England. (Hear, hear.) He begged to move.

Captain Donelan seconded the amendment.

Mr. Boscawen (Kent, Tunbridge Wells) said that he was, perhaps, the only member of the House who had lately spent a considerable time in Malta. At the beginning of the present war he was quartered there for nearly a year, and the political situation in the island interested him keenly. He had been rather amused to see the attempt at agitation made by a small oligarchy comparable to the Nationalist agitation in Ireland, or the Boer oligarchy in the Transvaal. (Laughter.) The hon. member, in a most temperate speech, had tried to prove that the most deplorable effort was being made to suppress the language of the Maltese. That was absolutely incorrect (Cheers.) The only language which had been affected at all was not the language of the Maltese people. The Italian language was no more the language of the Maltese than the Irish language was of the Irish members. (Laughter.)

Mr. Boland said that he knew that the ordinary language of the Maltese was the Maltese dialect; but Italian was the literary language of the country, and as such it was certainly in a better position than the English language at the present day.

Mr. Boscawen said that the Italian language was spoken by a close corporation, principally of lawyers who were anxious that the English language should not be introduced lest English barristers should go to Malta and take the work of the Courts away. (Laughter.) Italian was not the literary language of the Island in any sense.

Mr. Boland.—Are there any newspapers published in Maltese?

Mr. Boscawen said that certainly there were; and when the agitators urged the people of Malta to preserve the Italian language they addressed them in Maltese, for the simple reason that the people who attended the meetings, principally because they regarded the meetings as a huge joke, did not understand any language but Maltese. (Laughter.) It was a grotesque perversion to represent what had been done as the suppression of a national language. Certain classes had for generations affected the Italian, which was the language employed

in the Courts. This had led to a state of things without parallel in any colony under the sun. A short time ago a British subject could be haled before a Maltese Court and tried in a language which he did not understand without having any redress. A British officer was actually committed for contempt of Court because he refused to sign a deposition in Italian which he did not understand. The attention of the Colonial Secretary having been called to this, three principles were laid down in regard to the language question. It was enacted that, wherever a British subject was concerned the proceedings should be conducted in English or through an interpreter. Often he had had to attend Court in the case of some of his men; and how could he have seen that justice was being done if the proceedings had been conducted in a language which he did not understand? (Hear hear.)

9.30 Secondly, it was enacted by an Order in Council that after 15 years English should be substituted for the Italian language of the law Courts. That was perfectly right and proper. The opponents of this change were a narrow clique of Italian lawyers, who were afraid that they would no longer be able to monopolize the business of the Courts. He was not surprised at their fighting for their rights, but they were not the people of Malta. The methods of the small oligarchy who were conducting this agitation were peculiar. They circulated the most extraordinary stories; they said we were going to force the people to learn English in order that we might press their sons into going to the war in South Africa, and in order that their women might be forced out to South Africa as washerwomen to the British Army. There had been no forcing whatever. Up to two years in the schools only Maltese was taught, and through the medium of Maltese other subjects were taught. After two years the parents were allowed to choose whether their children should learn Italian or English; and the result was that 82 per cent of the parents had chosen English, and only about 18 per cent. had chosen Italian. It was perfectly clear that when the 15 years had elapsed the great bulk of the population would know English, and a very small production of the population would know Italian. The elected representatives of the people of Malta had refused to carry on the government, had refused supplies, and had endeavoured to stop public improvements. In consequence of their action the Colonial Secretary and the Governor of Malta had been obliged to fall back on the power which belonged to the Constitution of Malta, as passed in 1887, to impose the necessary taxation for these improvements. In view of the fact

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that Malta was a fortress and one of the keys of the Empire we had given an unduly liberal Constitution to Malta; and they had made very bad use of it. There was a population of about 180,000 in Malta, but there were only 10,000 electors, and at the last election only a few hundreds of the electors took the trouble to vote. Therefore this agitation really represented the views of fewer people than were actually in the British Army and Navy who spent so much of their time at Malta. In his opinion the Governor of Malta and the Colonial Secretary had adopted the only possible course open to them. For these reasons he supported the policy of his right hon. friend, which was the only policy which was calculated both to defend the interests of the Empire and, in the long run, really to benefit the Maltese people. (Cheers.)

Sir F. Flannery (Yorkshire, Shipley) said nothing could be in greater contrast to the type of oratory occasionally indulged in by hon. members on the benches opposite than the literary words and the cultured and felicitous expressions of the hon. gentleman opposite. (hear, hear). But he had based his statement on an entire misapprehension. The fact was that never since the days of the Roman Empire had the island of Malta been any part of the Italian Kingdom (hear, hear), nor in any way associated with the Italian people. The language which was spoken was a bastard Arabic, which might be spoken of as a dialect, so limited was its currency and so few were the people who had any connexion with it. He challenged the hon. member to state one single reason, except those of national feeling and sympathy, why Italian should be used and English should not be used.

Mr. Boland said Italian had always been the literary language in Malta until the English people took it under their protection. He thought that in 1831 an ordinance which was sent out by the King was written in Italian.

Sir F. Flannery said they were dealing with what was best for the people of Malta as part of the Empire. Was there any reason why it would benefit the people of Malta to have Italian superimposed on their own language instead of English? Not a single benefit would be conferred on any man, woman, or child in Malta if the Italian language were used in the Courts. The hon. gentleman had nothing in support of the view but a general feeling of sympathy for those whom he considered oppressed, which distinguished all Irishmen. The English language was the predominant language of the world; it was the mother tongue of some 70 millions of people, and throughout the world it was the

means of communication most generally understood. It was far more useful to encourage the rising generation of Maltese in learning English than Italian in addition to their own Arabic.

Mr. Buxton (Tower Hamlets, Poplar) said he had expressed his view on the subject last year and found it largely in accord with that of the Colonial Secretary, though he could not say he quite agreed with all the steps the right hon. gentleman had taken. There were certain points raised by the hon. member which required an answer, more especially as some months had passed since the House had had any information on the subject. It must be recognized that the state of Malta was not satisfactory; there had been meetings, agitation, and tumult, indicating the interest taken in this language question, and the representative element in the hybrid Constitution of Malta had ceased to exist. It appeared from despatches that a large percentage of the parents had exercised their option in favour of their children learning English instead of Italian, and he was glad to find that was so. He would like to know, however, how this option had been presented to the people of Malta, and if any pressure had been exercised to influence the choice.

Mr. Chamberlain.—I recognize with great satisfaction that the hon. member for Poplar did on a previous occasion give me his approval and support, and I valued that very greatly, as I do on the present occasion, because in all these matters it is desirable, if possible, to have a continuity of policy in regard to our colonies. The fact that he spoke in favour of the policy I had to pursue, and which I think he would have pursued had he been in my place, gives the hon. member the right to intervene in this debate. When, however, he goes on to suggest there was any want of courtesy to the hon. member for Kerry in my not rising at once, he is mistaken. I agree the hon. member is justified in introducing this subject to the House, and he did so in terms of which I have no right to complain, but I am bound to say that as all his statements had been completely and categorically answered by my hon. friend I thought I would wait for some new view of the situation before I presented myself to the House. I desired, however, to have the opportunity of making a statement on this subject, and I am really obliged to the hon. member for Kerry for giving me the opportunity. It is not that in itself and in regard to its intrinsic merits it is a question of very serious importance; but there are certain collateral issues and considerations connected with it which I think have been a good deal misunderstood, and in regard to which I am glad to have the opposi-

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tunity of putting a full statement before the House. Let me first dispose of some details upon which the hon. member for Kerry has been misinformed, and in regard to which there have been grotesque exaggerations on the part of gentlemen who are known as elective members of the Council of Malta.

Mr. Mac Neill.—Who are they? (Cries of "Order.")

Mr. Chamberlain.—I hope the hon. gentleman is not going to continue his interruptions.

Mr. Mac Neill rose, and there were renewed cries of "Order."

The Speaker.—The right hon. gentleman is in possession of the House. (Hear, hear.)

Mr. Mac Neill.—Of course, if he will not give way.

Mr. Chamberlain.—The first of these points is in regard to public meeting. The hon. member in his amendment says "the people of Malta have been restrained from exercising the right to hold public meetings." Now that is an absolute misstatement; nothing of the kind has happened. The people of Malta, who, as my hon. friend has said, are rather fond of demonstrations, have had ample opportunity of making them. Within the last few months a large meeting was held, and at other times the elective members have utterly failed to get them. On one occasion the principal meeting was held in a great open space within easy reach of the centre of the town, and there the elective members declared there were 30,000 people present. But I happen to have seen a photograph of the meeting, and, having a large experience of these assemblies, I am able to say the number was about 5,000; still, a considerable number out of a population of 180,000. But I do not suppose the hon. member is aware that, so far are the Executive from interfering with these meetings—which are perfectly harmless, though occasionally some rather seditious language is used at them—so far are the Executive from interfering that they have given every assistance in their power, running on this occasion special trains for the advantage of those who wished to attend the meeting, and, contrary to the ordinary practice and arrangement of the line, they stopped every train at the station which happened to be nearest to the place of meeting. No, Sir, there has been no interference whatever with the right of public meeting in Malta. (Cheers.) What has taken place, what is the foundation for the hon. member's mistake, is the fact that a procession which was intended to pass through the narrow streets of Malta was prohibited on the ground that it would probably lead to serious accident and disturbance. And the prohibi-

tion took place, not by any new decision of the Executive Government, but in accordance with the ordinance or law — ordinance, I think — which was passed some years ago regulating such processions. (Hear, hear.) That ordinance had been rendered necessary by some disturbance which had taken place; and if the hon. member is acquainted with Malta, and has visited it as I have done, he will know that the streets are extremely narrow. They are crowded on days of *fete* like Sundays and similar days by the ordinary population, and the passing through such streets of political processions, accompanied by bands and flags and so on, would probably be a cause of considerable difficulty to the police authorities. I think that, in these circumstances, the Government were perfectly right in prohibiting the procession, although they gave every assistance, and would do so again, to anything in the nature of a public meeting held in a place where no danger to order could result. (Hear, hear.) Then the hon. gentleman went on to make much of the visit of my noble friend the Under-Secretary for the Colonies, Lord Onslow, to Malta. I may inform him that Lord Onslow went in pursuance of an old engagement to an old friend. He went to pay a purely private visit to the Governor of Malta, with whom he had been on terms of intimacy and friendship for many years, and, not being there in any official position, when the elective members tried to take advantage of his presence in order to send a deputation or present a petition, he requested that they should put their views in writing and promised, in that case, to convey them immediately to myself. He was perfectly right in doing that, and no discourtesy whatever was shown to the elective members when he took such a course. (Cheers.) I think the hon. gentleman the member for Poplar said that affairs were worse now than they were, was it a year or two years ago?

Mr. Buxton was understood to say "a year or two ago."

Mr. Chamberlain.—Well, at some previous time. (Laughter.)

Mr. Buxton.—Since this ordinance was promulgated.

Mr. Chamberlain.—I really do not think so. I do not think they are as bad. The term "worse" is, of course, comparative. We have been accustomed for a very long time to occasional friction in Malta as in other colonies. There has been some friction of late; but it would be the greatest mistake in the world to exaggerate that friction, and when the hon. gentleman talks, as I think he did, of riot, I can only say that the term is absolutely inappropriate. (Cheers.) There has

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been nothing in the nature of riot in Malta. The worst of the incidents which have occurred in connexion with this political agitation was the destruction of a British flag in front of the British Club in Malta. When I first heard of that insult to our national emblem, I made immediate inquiries, and I learned that a few schoolboys or youths from the University had bought the sort of flag which is sold in the streets of London for a penny, and which, I think, is a few inches in size, and I torn it up in one of the streets of Malta. It was, of course, a bit of play which I deprecate, but to which it would be perfectly ludicrous to attach the slightest political importance. (Cheers.) I say, then, do not let us exaggerate. We should make a great mistake if we exaggerated anything which has taken place in Malta. A certain difference of opinion has arisen between the elective members of the Council of the Governor and his Majesty's Government; but we should make a great mistake if we were led by a knowledge of that difference to impute to the general population of Malta anything in the nature of serious discontent. (Cheers.) On the other hand, I do not want to depreciate any dissatisfaction which may have arisen in any section of the Maltese population. It is perfectly true, as the hon. member for South Kerry said, that the Maltese have been a most loyal and law-abiding people. (Cheers.) They boast of their loyalty. They are proud of the fact that they were incorporated in the British Empire at their own request and not by conquest. (Cheers.) They are proud of having fought with us for the rescue of their country from French rule; and they have, ever since, shown, on every critical occasion, a great affection and regard for the connexion. (Cheers.) I would give as two illustrations of that the fact that a most admirable Militia regiment has been formed in Malta with the full authority of the Maltese population, and that it forms at the present time a most important unit in his Majesty's Malta military forces (cheers), and that some time ago, when all the Empire was moved at the receipt of the news of the relief of Ladysmith, I believe that satisfactory event was nowhere received with greater enthusiasm or with greater expressions of relief than it was in our small but most interesting and most loyal colony of Malta. (Cheers.) I am an Imperialist, and I desire, therefore, that those feelings of affection and loyalty should be cherished and not discouraged (cheers); and if there is any discontent, even although it is based entirely upon a misapprehension, a misunderstanding, still such discontent is to be deprecated, and it is to be removed if by any action on our

part we can remove it; and the grievance, even though it be only an imaginary grievance, ought to be treated by us with respect and in a conciliatory spirit. (Cheers.) That is the spirit in which I approach the amendment of the hon. member for South Kerry, and I am glad to say that his language makes it easy for me to do so. (Hear, hear.) But, before I deal with the question to which he has principally devoted his attention, I think it is desirable to put before the House a brief statement of the general situation and of the past history of our connexion with this dependency. Why do we hold Malta? That is the first and essential point in any discussion of our relations with it. We hold Malta solely and entirely as a fortress essential to our position in the Mediterranean. (Cheers.) We do not hold it for any pecuniary advantage; quite the contrary. The trade of Malta is, of course, a mere infinitesimal atom in the great ocean of British Imperial trade. What there is of it is chiefly done with Mediterranean States, and the direct, or even indirect, pecuniary advantage which we could possibly derive by possession of this island is really not worth taking into account. On the other hand, ever since we have held the island, and especially of late years, we have been pouring millions into it from the pockets of the British taxpayers, not, of course, specially intended for the advantage of the Maltese population, although it has materially improved their position, but in the general interests of the Empire, in order to make the fortress which we hold absolutely impregnable. Now, that being understood, that we hold Malta not as we hold an ordinary colony, but as a fortress, the first condition which we have to bear in mind is the security of the Imperial interests which are connected with its possession. (Hear, hear.) And, in addition to what I have said as to our strong sympathy with the Maltese, our desire to secure their regard and affection, there is also this Imperial consideration—in a fortress anything like open agitation against the Government is a thing that cannot be tolerated on the face of it. (Cheers, and Nationalist cries of "Oh.") If you are prepared to tolerate it, you must be prepared to give up your fortress. If you consider it essential to your security to hold your fortress, you must hold it under the usual conditions, and you cannot allow sedition to prevail within it. (Cheers and Nationalist interruption.)

Mr. MacNeill rose to speak, and amid cries of "Order" persisted in standing, although Mr. Chamberlain refused to give way.

The Speaker.—Order, order. The right hon. gentleman does not give way.

Mr. MacNeill having resumed his seat,

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after several ineffective attempts to address the House.

Mr. Chamberlain said,—I refused to give way to the hon. gentleman (cheers, and Nationalist cries of "Oh"), and I object to interruptions which are not relevant (cheers) when I am making a serious statement. I will explain to the House the conditions, the necessary conditions, which every sensible man will admit, whatever his views may be, must be the conditions under which we hold a possession of this kind. It was a feeling of the importance of those conditions which led to a remark of the Duke of Wellington's, which may well be quoted at the present time. He was asked at one period whether he would be willing to agree to a Constitution for Malta, and he said—I am not quoting his exact language, which was the language of the period (laughter)—he said, "To give a Constitution to Malta is absurd, you might as well give a constitution to a man-of-war!" There is no doubt whatever that there is a great deal of common sense in that remark, as there was, in fact, in all the remarks of the great Duke. But it will be easily understood that politicians in Malta, just as one might say it would be probable of politicians elsewhere in similar circumstances, would not be likely to accept as final such a decision. They naturally strive to magnify their own office, and they are always endeavouring to increase the political rights and privileges which are granted to them. I do not blame them; it is perfectly natural. But here let me say, by way of parenthesis, that it is an entire mistake to suppose, as I think the hon. member for South Kerry supposed, that the present irritation, or friction, is a new thing, or that it is due in any way to the special and exceptional action of the present Colonial Secretary. That is not the case at all; and if members of the House have looked at the papers which have been presented they will have seen that in every one of the documents which have been presented, whether by private individuals or by the elective members or by any other representative authority in Malta, it is the invariable claim that they have been subjected to a century of oppression. Well, I cannot go back a century. I am not responsible, at all events, for the early part of it (laughter); and, although one makes allowances for what the hon. member for South Kerry called the Southern temperament of the population, I think you must feel that that Southern temperament has led them a little to exaggerate on the present occasion. At all events, if it be true, as they say, that there has been a century of oppression, and that the Maltese during the whole of that time have been subject to a tyrannical rule,

that their life-blood has been drained—I am using the expressions of these gentlemen—it is worth while for a moment to go back and see what the real circumstances are. Malta became British in 1813. It became British, as the Maltese themselves rightly boast, with the good will and authority of the Maltese themselves. What were the terms, then, which the Maltese made with Great Britain when they voluntarily entered the British Empire? They were not terms of surrender, it is perfectly true; we did not conquer the Maltese, we were fighting side by side with them, but we were never fighting against them. It was not a conquest it was a cession by the representative authorities of the Maltese. What terms did they make? The Constitution, if, indeed, it can be called a Constitution, which existed at the time of the cession, and for a great number of years afterwards, was a purely autocratic Constitution. The Governor was Judge and jury in every case in which Imperial interests were concerned; he was the Grand Elector, he was the representative authority; all laws were made by him. And I have always understood that Sir Thomas Maitland, when he was Governor of Malta, from 1813 to, I think, 1824, and who is still remembered in Malta with the greatest kindness, was a very autocratic gentleman. He was, in fact, the best type of beneficent despot; he had no idea of Constitution or of elective members; and Sir Thomas Maitland, or Old Tom, as he was generally called, would have been very much astonished indeed if he had been permitted to live to read the representations of the modern elective members. Now from 1803 to 1838, that is for 35 years, the Constitution of Malta was absolutely autocratic; there was no representation of any kind. Then in 1838 a representative element was introduced for the first time, but representative element was not an elective element. The Council of Government then consisted of the Governor and six persons, all of whom were nominated by the Governor. Three of them were official members, three of them were unofficial members. These were the gentlemen who, up to 1841, made the laws of Malta. I am giving the House this short account of the history of the constitutional question in Malta because it is the custom, as I have said, of the elected members to represent that tyranny has been imposed upon them. On the contrary, the Constitution as settled between the representatives of those who conceded Malta, or allowed its incorporation in the British Empire, was absolutely autocratic, and the constitutional changes which have been made since then have been in the

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direction of giving greater political rights and larger political liberty. I come to 1849. Then, for the first time, at the instigation of the British Government, elected members were introduced. The Council of Government then consisted of the Governor and nine nominated, with eight elected members. But, it will be observed, under this Constitution, as under the previous one, in the last resort the Governor, representing the Imperial authority, representing the security of the fortress and the interests of the Empire, was supreme. These elected gentlemen were called in to advise him and assist him, but in the last resort the will of the Imperial Government prevailed. That went on until 1887. Now I call the attention of the hon. member for South Kerry to this fact, that for 84 years the majority power was in the hands of the Governor, not in the hands of what are called the representatives of the people of Malta. How far they are representative I will deal with directly. But for 84 years the majority was in the hands of the representatives of the Imperial Government, and accordingly the interests of the fortress were absolutely secure. I come to 1887, to modern times, only 15 years ago, under a Conservative Government. In deference to the wishes which were expressed by representatives, at all events, of a section of the Maltese population, for the first time in the history of Malta, a majority of the Council of Government was given to the elected members. The Council consisted, and consists still, of the Governor and six official members, and there were 14 elected members one of whom, I should say, has since disappeared owing to a change which is a matter of detail. The consequence is that the control of the finances, and therefore the absolute control of the government of Malta subject to one safety valve which was fortunately provided, has been transferred from the Imperial Government, from the representatives of the Empire, to the elected members. What results from that? Suppose the elected members chose to abuse their power. In that case the whole administration of Malta is at their mercy. They could refuse every penny for every service in the island; and I need scarcely say that in those circumstances the position of the Imperial Government, as the sole trustees in that case of the interests of the Empire and of the maintenance of this great and most important fortress, would be one of the greatest difficulty.

But, as I have said, there was one safety valve. My noble predecessor, the late Lord Carnarvon, who was officially responsible for this change, foresaw the possibility, although

he did not anticipate the probability, of such an abuse of the new powers which were being for the first time in the history of the fortress confided to the elected members; and accordingly he laid great stress in his despatches upon the maintenance of the power to legislate over their heads, in case of necessity, by Order in Council. If that power had not been reserved to us, long before now the affairs of Malta would undoubtedly have occupied the attention of this House, unless, indeed, we were prepared to abandon altogether our authority in the island. Fortunately, however, as I say, legislation by Order in Council was expressly reserved. That is a safety valve; and accordingly, if the powers of the elected members have been or are again abused in any way, the Imperial Government have had it always in their power to legislate over their heads by means of this Order in Council. Now I think the House will feel with me that the Imperial Government were really extraordinarily sanguine and extraordinarily generous when they gave these great powers to the elected members in a colony under such conditions as those which exist in Malta. But did that satisfy the Maltese representatives? Did that satisfy these political gentlemen? (Nationalists cries of "Oh.") Am I to withdraw the word gentlemen? (Laughter and cheers.) I say even this generous grant of political powers did not satisfy these political gentlemen—I will say politicians if you prefer that shorter word (laughter)—who naturally, in every country and in all circumstances, desire to magnify their own privileges and rights. (Hear, hear.) Since I myself have been in office I have had deputations and representations from the elected members claiming that they are still slaves—that is the actual word they use—and asking that a further extension of constitutional rights should be given to them, and that Malta should be made a self-governing colony. (Laughter and Nationalist cheers.) I would only say it is clear that it would be difficult to satisfy the full demands of the gentlemen who are dissatisfied with our recent proceedings. (Hear, hear.) What has been the result, however, of the concession which was made in 1887? Since then there has been continual friction, not between the Imperial Government and the people of Malta, but between the Imperial Government and the elected members. (Nationalist laughter and Ministerial cheers.) Those who, like hon. gentlemen below the gang-way, have probably not studied the details of this question, perhaps will not perceive that there is a distinction to be made to which I will direct their attention presently.

10.30 For the moment I say that the irritation, or friction, or whatever else you

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please to call it, has existed almost continuously between the elected members and the Imperial Government, not in the time of this Government alone, but in the time of my predecessor, and in fact ever since the concession was made. The most serious difficulty arose in regard to the marriage question, which, fortunately, is for the time being in abeyance, and I sincerely hope may not again be raised in a way to create irritation. As I have mentioned the marriage question, let me tell the House what that question was. In Malta so anxious have we been to make every possible concession to the sentiments, the prejudices, and above all to the religious beliefs of the people that we have allowed institutions which have not their parallel, I believe, in any other Catholic country in the world. As far as I know there is no Catholic country in the world in which the institution of civil marriage has not been established; but in Malta there is no institution of civil marriage, and difficulties causing most serious friction have arisen owing to the existence of a mixed population—Protestants and Catholics living side by side—and the mixed marriages which have taken place in connexion with them. Occasionally the result has been immorality. The difficulty of securing legitimate marriage has led to immorality. In other cases the difficulty has been got over by temporary expedients, by Governors' licences, or other methods of that kind. But I must say that, if these questions are to be raised, this is one of the questions in which the concession made to Maltese feeling has been so great that I can well conceive that the Government might be taken to task for not having dealt with the matter in a more satisfactory way—more in accordance with the precedents in other countries. But I said I would draw the attention of the House to the distinction between the elected members and the population, but this has already been done. But I will read the figures. The population of Malta is 180,000. Of this number only 10,000 are electors—a ridiculous proportion as compared with the proportion in this country, for instance, or in Ireland. In this country or Ireland the number would probably be 30,000 electors. But it is also true that of these 10,000 electors the number of those who take the trouble to go to the poll is really insignificant. It is impossible to make a general statement on the subject because in many cases the elections have not been disputed; but whenever there has been a contested election the number of persons voting appears to have only borne a very small proportion—a ridiculous proportion—to the number of electors. Although the elected members may fairly claim to be the only representative au-

thority in the island, it is also possible for those who differ from their proceedings to say that, at all events, the vast majority of the population in the island do not take sufficient interest in their policy or their proceedings to vote. Another fact which is to be observed—although I do not want to attach too much importance to it—is that the more educated and intelligent part of the population in Malta, who have larger stakes, do not take part in elections and cannot be induced to present themselves for election. I think that is a deplorable fact. When they are asked to do so, they object that the language of the local papers is so scurrilous and so personal that they are not prepared to face it. I do not think myself that is any excuse. (Laughter and cheers.) If members of this House were guided by similar considerations it would mean a clearance of these benches. (Cheers.) I myself pointed out to distinguished and representative citizens of Malta that I thought it was their duty—a duty which they owed to the people of Malta—that they should, in spite of this severe and, I admit, scurrilous criticism, present themselves for election and thereby secure a better representation of the whole population. But the facts are the facts—that they did not present themselves; and accordingly a very large section, and a very important section, of the population was not represented by the so-called elected members. That is the state of the case so far as regards the Constitution. The immediate question with which we have to deal is the language question; but, believe me, if we had not the language question to deal with we should have the marriage question, the taxation question, or some other question which would be certain to be raised, and upon which precisely the same issues would have to be decided. But what does the House imagine the language question of Malta to be? Listening to the hon. gentleman the member for South Kerry I should have supposed, if I had not known better, that Italian was the national language of Malta. In the explanation which he gave afterwards he said it was the language of the cultured in Malta; but in his original speech he spoke of it as the national language, and I should have supposed that the British Government at the present time were deliberately and against the wishes of the Maltese forcing upon them the English language in substitution for their own national language of Italian. There is not the slightest shadow of foundation for either of these statements. (Cheers.) The language of Malta is not Italian; the language of Malta is an Arabic *patois*, which is not a literary language and which cannot, therefore, be

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adopted for literary purposes. There is no literature in the Maltese language; but the Italian language, which the hon. gentleman represents as, if not the national language of the Maltese, the language of the cultured, is not understood by one in seven of the population of Malta. (Cheers.) I believe I am understating the case. There are more people in Malta that speak and read English than speak and read Italian; and if, indeed, we are to distinguish between the national language of the highly-educated classes, then I say undoubtedly, on the figures in my possession, English more than Italian is the language to which we should give the preference. What are the figures? At the last census, including the garrison—and for the life of me I do not know why the garrison of Malta is to be absolutely ignored in a British colony, continuing to form part of the population, why it should be excluded (cheers), when it is there, subjected to Maltese laws, tried in Maltese Courts, by Maltese Judges, by Maltese juries—the population that spoke English was 43,000 against a population which spoke Italian of 23,000. But if you choose to except from consideration all the troops, all the sailors, all the people in Government employ, then the numbers would be 19,000 speaking English, 21,00 speaking Italian. That is without taking into account those employed in connexion with the administration; and so on the island you have almost an equality between those who speak English and those who speak Italian, but, if you include the troops in the island, you will find that in favour of those speaking English you have a majority of nearly two to one. Then we are told of the official language that it is Italian. The hon. member for South Kerry repeated that statement, and he declared that the official language of the island of Malta had been Italian for centuries. (Laughter.) Yes; no doubt the hon. member got that statement from the information supplied to him, but that statement also is absolutely untrue. Any such assertion is entirely inaccurate. If the hon. member would only read the history of Malta, the history of the Knights of Malta, and the previous connexion with France, he would find what are the facts of that matter. Why, the official language of Malta during the time of the Knights of Malta, the language used in the Courts—in the decisions of the Courts—and in many of the deeds and documents registered in the Courts down to 1815, 12 years after the British occupation, was Latin, (Hear, hear.) It was found that Latin was becoming a too archaic language, so to speak and it then became necessary to adopt a modern language. At the time Italian was the best known language in Malta, no doubt.

There were those who spoke English, but a number spoke Italian. Accordingly, Italian was by universal consent accepted as the official language of the island; but to say that Italian was all along the official language of the island is against the whole history of Malta. Now, of late years when the number of the English increased and when the English troops also enormously increased, the inconvenience as to the language question became more and more manifest; and at last it came to a head in the case of the Colonel whose name has been mentioned in this matter all along. My hon. friend the member for Tunbridge has dealt with that matter. I shall state briefly what occurred. This officer was called as a witness in a case before a Maltese tribunal. He gave his evidence in English. When he had finished giving his evidence he was presented by one of the officials of the Court with the deposition in Italian. His evidence had been translated by the interpreter. He did not understand when asked to sign the deposition. He looked at the document, and he thought that certain words had been incorrectly translated. He therefore objected to sign his deposition written out in Italian. The Judge told him that it was necessary that he should sign under the law, and that if he did not he would render himself liable to imprisonment. He then looked on the deposition, but said that he himself did not understand Italian. His offer with regard to the deposition was refused, and, that being so, he finally declined to sign a document that he did not understand. (Cheers.) And this officer, in a British Court, in a British colony, was actually committed to gaol for contempt of Court for three days by the Judge of the Court. The sentence thus passed was not carried into effect; mercy was extended to the offender. (Laughter.) Authority intervened, and the colonel was released. Does any man imagine that any one standing in my place (cheers) was going to submit to the possibility, of a continuance of such a state of things? (Renewed cheers.) Sir, we proposed various changes, but these proposals of ours were rejected by the elected members. We then carried those changes by Order in Council. (Cheers and counter Irish cheers.) In criminal cases, where the accused is a Briton, it was provided that the language is to be English. In civil cases, where an Englishman is a party, the Judge, the jurymen, the counsel, the witnesses, or the parties may, if they like, use English. That is to say, it is optional to use English or Italian. I do not think that that is a change in the law stronger than the circumstances required. (Loud cheers.) Of course the circumstances required

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a review of the whole situation, and, in connexion with that, I had to consider the question of education in Malta. (Hear, hear.) I determined to carry out a decision which had been in contemplation some time before; and from that date, in 1899, every parent in Malta had the free option—there was no compulsion of any kind—to elect whether he would wish his child taught, in addition to Maltese which was his natural language, as a foreign language, English or Italian. He could make his choice; if he chose Italian he was perfectly free, and if he choose English he was free, too. Now what was the result? The people of Malta were told, on the other side, that Italian was their natural language, and all sorts of things were said to them about the Englishmen who were desperate persons, and that they wished to flood this delightful island of Malta with their influence, and that the bread would be taken out of the mouths of the Maltese. What was the result? When the choice of the Maltese was free, when they were not under the influence of the agitation, 98 per cent. elected for the English language. (Cheers.) Of course they did. (Laughter and cheers.) English is the great commercial language. It is a question of bread and butter. It was to the interest of the people to learn the language, which is in itself the passport to all the commerce of the world (cheers); and it was on that ground, no doubt, that the Maltese parents decided for the English language in the interest of their children. Since the agitation began—I do not wish to dwell upon controversial matters—but since the pressure began to be applied this 98 per cent. has fallen as low as 75 per cent.; it is now rising again; I believe it is 80 per cent.

Mr. Buxton asked how this option was taken.

Mr. Chamberlain.—Free option on the part of the parents. The parents have to declare their preference, and no pressure can be applied directly or indirectly. If the hon. gentleman will put down a question, I will give him the necessary answer. I can assure the right hon. gentleman that I have not the slightest doubt that the most absolute freedom of choice has prevailed except so far as it has been interfered with by certain sections of the population to whom I have already referred. And I say this—it is the first statement I make with regard to the future—at all hazards and against all opposition we are determined to preserve this freedom of choice. (Cheers.) For we will not at the dictation of a minority take away from 80 per cent. of the population of Malta their right to learn English and force upon them the necessity of learning a language which they do not wish

to learn. (Hear, hear.) So far with regard to education. But we have done more than that. The hon. member for South Kerry said that we had made an ordinance providing that the English language should become the official language 15 years hence. (Mr. Boland.—The language of the Courts.) That is a mistake. The period is 18 years hence; but that is not the main correction I have to make. No ordinance has been issued. No ordinance could be issued to pledge future Governments. All that has been done is to issue a proclamation declaring the intention of the Government at the time named to make English the official language of the Courts. Permit me to say that this was really done purely as an act of kindness, and that affects very much my feeling with regard to its preservation. It has no operative effect whatever. A mere proclamation declaring the intention of the present Government does not bind the successors of the present Government; it does not bind those who, long after I am dead and the present Government has disappeared, may be dealing with the situation; but I may say myself that if at that time—some 20 years hence—it be found that what I anticipate has not taken place, and the vast majority of the population do not understand English at that time, but do understand Italian, no doubt my successors will continue Italian as the official language. They would only adopt English if they found that it was in the interest of the population. But my reason for issuing the proclamation was, not to declare in any authoritative way what the future hides in it, but to give warning to the people chiefly concerned, the officials connected with the Courts and all others, young men who may be studying or practising in the Courts, and so to enable them to prepare themselves for that eventuality. (Cheers.) That is the whole object, and I attach no importance to it except as a warning given to the persons chiefly interested, and as of possible advantage to them. That being the case, I beg the House to understand that the most recent features of the agitation have arisen since it was known that we intended to allow parents to have an option with regard to the second language their children should learn. After the issue of this proclamation expressing the intention with regard to a period nearly 20 years hence, what did the elected members do? They were entitled to make a protest, to have a debate and a division such as would have happened in this House. They would have been entitled to petition the King and this House and to have asked for the reconsideration of this condition of things. But that was not what they did. What

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they did was to abuse the authority we have given them under the Constitution of 1887 to deal with the estimates. They refused a vast mass of estimates presented absolutely in the interests of the people of Malta. (Hear hear.) The estimates presented were for £623,000 capital expenditure. All that would have to be provided for out of taxation would have been interest and sinking fund. What was it for? In the first place for new schools. Is that for the benefit of the English? No; they are elementary schools entirely for the benefit of the Maltese population. There is no compulsory education in Malta; but so eager are the people for education that the provision that had been made has proved insufficient and a considerable extension was required. In the next place, the money was wanted for the drainage of Malta. That was not only an Imperial necessity for the health of the garrison, but a local necessity for the health of the Maltese people. Everybody knows of the Maltese fever. It is a special form of fever which medical authorities believe to be entirely due to the state of the drains, the condition of the harbour, and other sanitary defects. It is absolutely necessary to remedy these defects; and a sum of, I think, over £300,000 was required for this purpose. A leper Asylum was required for women. The elective members refused it. The general hospital has been reported again and again as being in a terribly inefficient condition, and it has become a matter of great importance for the people of Malta to have a new hospital. Certain repairs were wanted on the roads, partly for Imperial purposes, to render them fit for the movement of artillery, partly for the benefit of the country people bringing their produce to market. The electric lighting required extension. That was refused. A breakwater was refused for the island of Gozo for the benefit of the fishermen, to enable them to earn their livelihood. This was an improvement much like those that have been promoted along the coasts of the congested districts of Ireland. Those services which I have named account for £600,000 out of the £623,000 that was asked for. Now the Government, having considered this state of things, decided that where purely local interests were concerned we must so long as there were elective members, allow them to play ducks and drakes with these interests of their constituents. But wherever Imperial interest were concerned, or where there were interests that so considerably affected the welfare of the population that they became Imperial interests, we must interfere. (Hear, hear.) Accordingly, we determined to impose taxation in order to provide for the

expenditure of £380,000—about two-thirds of the original expenditure.

We have imposed the necessary taxation in order to provide for these expenses. The people of Malta, as represented by the elected representatives, say that we are draining their life blood, that it is taken from them to enrich the English, and all sorts of southern exaggerations of that kind. (Laughter). Now, the taxation amounts to £38,000 per annum. It is estimated that £17,000 of that will come from wine and spirits, £11,000 from tobacco, and £7,500 from stamps, and that only leaves a small sum to come from other sources; and the majority of the taxation under those three heads falls upon the British and European population and not upon the Maltese. (Hear, hear). Owing to our presence there, to the vast amount of money we have spent upon naval and military works, the rate of wages in Malta has gone up immensely beyond the corresponding rate of wages in other Mediterranean States, and the people of Malta are much more prosperous than most of their neighbours. The taxation of Malta is only £1 7s. 6d. per head, which is less than that of any States in the neighbourhood, while that of the United Kingdom, is £4 13s. per head. I say the Maltese under these circumstances have not much to grumble at. The condition of things caused by the action of the elected representatives still continuing, we put the matter straight by this Order in Council, which I have explained. But since then they have recommenced. They are rejecting vote after vote, and, of course, the whole of the Administration is at their mercy. And, Sir, the avowed determination of these gentlemen is to bring the Government of Malta to a standstill. They think in rejecting all the Estimates for carrying on the Government that we shall give way upon the language question or some other questions. Sir, we have got an easy remedy. (Laughter and cheers.) We have the old remedy. (Hear, hear.) We have the power of legislating by Order in Council, which we shall use without the slightest hesitation whenever it is necessary. (Hear, hear). But then, if we are to go on in this way, if year after year administration is to be put in a position of chaos and anarchy in Malta, or if, as an alternative, we are to proceed by the arbitrary act of Order in Council, it may be said that that is an undignified proceeding, that it is making the Constitution which we have conceded a farce, and that we had better do without the Constitution. Now, Sir, I have dealt with this question for reason which I have stated, and another reason which I have still to state at greater length than the immediate necessity.

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of the case requires. I will just remind the House of what I have endeavoured to show. I have endeavoured to show that, so far from not having given terms to the Maltese people since the cession by them of their island to us, we have, on the contrary, gone far beyond the terms of the cession; and there will be no objection on our part, if any such general desire were expressed, to go back to the terms of the cession. I have endeavoured to show, in the second place, that as regards questions of language, while we decline to force the Italian language on a majority of at least four-fifths who do not desire to learn it, we do intend to preserve an absolutely free choice, so that if opinion should change in Malta, the system will change with it; and there will be at all times an automatic power on the part of the whole of the Maltese population to have either English or Italian as they prefer. (A voice. — Why not both ?) Because all the experts in education say that any attempt to teach very young children two languages besides their own results in their learning neither. There is, of course, nothing to prevent them when they go to the University from adding to their knowledge of Maltese as many other languages as they think fit. In the third place, if complaint is made of our taxation, I have endeavoured to prove that this taxation is absolutely for the security and welfare of the fortress and the garrison as well as for the benefit of the people of Malta, that it is paid out of the pockets of the wealthy, or comparatively wealthy, European and British population, and that it is expended for the benefit of the majority, who have profited from it in other ways, and, in the most material way, from the British occupation. There is one consideration besides those I have dealt with which I regard as of very considerable importance. There is no doubt that the action which we have taken—which, I believe, has been altogether misunderstood—has caused some pain and, perhaps, some apprehension in Italy. If that be the case, I deeply regret it (hear, hear), and, on behalf of the Government, I will do everything in my power to remove any such feeling. (Cheers.) A good feeling between Italy and this country is, I think, for both peoples a national asset. (Cheers.) We, I am sure, sympathize with the Italian people in their great struggle for unity and in the splendid effort by which, through many vicissitudes, they have maintained that unity. (Cheers.) Our relations with Italy have always been friendly. Our interests and theirs are in many cases, and especially in the Mediterranean, mutual interests. Our soldiers have fought side by side. It would be deplorable if any misapprehension were to alter or

to diminish in any way the sympathies which have existed, and which, I hope, may long continue to exist, between the two nations. (Cheers.) I believe that any feeling which prevails in Italy, and which exists, no doubt, especially among the cultivated and governing classes, is a feeling of sentiment. I do not think it is pretended on their behalf that they have any substantial grievance, least of all any right of interference. But these educated classes are proud, and justly proud, of one of the most beautiful and classic languages in the world; and it is to them a subject of pain that anything should be done which seems to place it in a subordinate position, or—as they have been led to believe, although entirely inaccurately—which would proscribe it; and, accordingly, this feeling in their case does not, I believe, extend for one moment over what I have expressed as the policy of his Majesty's Government—namely, to secure to the population of Malta what is their clear, undoubted right, an option as to the education to be given to their children. What the Italian classes have objected to is this proclamation to which I have already referred, the object of which I have explained, and the effect of which I believe has been altogether exaggerated in Italy. But I do not want any kind of misunderstanding to remain in Italy: and, therefore, if I could believe that by the adoption of a compromise in this matter I would remove any feeling which exists among our good allies, the Italians, and if I should, at the same time, remove any feeling of a similar character which may exist among similar classes in Malta to whom the Italian language is the current channel of expression; then I say without hesitation I would formally withdraw this proclamation. (Cheers.) I would withdraw it at once without any condition, perfectly willing to trust to the future. (Cheers.) If, as I have said, the future should show that the vast majority of the people of Malta should in 20 years understand English and not understand Italian, I imagine it would be absurd that proceedings in the Courts should be conducted in what to the people of Malta would be a foreign tongue. But I may be mistaken in my prediction or anticipation, and in that case neither I nor any one else would wish that the terms of the proclamation should be strictly observed. Therefore I say that I am perfectly ready to withdraw the proclamation of which the hon. member for South Kerry and others have complained. (Hear, hear.) I think that this is an intelligent concession. (Hear, hear.) I hope it will be recognised as such by the elected members as well as by other persons to whom I have referred. I hope they will now look at this question of taxation as we should

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expect them to do in other times. I do not for one moment deny their right to criticize the proposals of the Government and to oppose them in the last resort; but to refuse absolutely necessary votes of money for purposes from which their own constituents would derive the very greatest benefit in order to defeat the decision of the Government in regard to some other question is really not in accordance with a Parliamentary Constitution, and I earnestly trust that that course of action will be abandoned. (Hear, hear.) It is not to be contemplated that the state of things which we all regret and which exists at the present time should continue. You cannot expect the Government responsible for this great Imperial fortress to allow this childish game to proceed (cheers); and it would be clearly the duty of any Government in the circumstances to preserve the great Imperial interests in their keeping either by going back to the Constitution before 1887 or by such a modification of that Constitution as may be necessary to give the Government a controlling voice in the administration. I make no threat—I have endeavoured to treat the question in a conciliatory way (cheers)—and I hope that no drastic measures may be necessary, and that the elected members and all concerned will meet me in the same spirit in which I have endeavoured to meet them, and that nothing may occur in the future to disturb the good relations which have existed, I am glad to say, during 100 years between the population of Malta and his Majesty's Government. (Cheers.)

Sir H. Campbell-Bannerman remarked that this was not the first proclamation Mr. Chamberlain had withdrawn, but he knew of no concession which would have better effect than in this instance. (Hear, hear.) Do I understand from the right hon. gentleman that the procedure of the Courts are being conducted in Italian and English? Are the proceedings not being conducted in Maltese, a language which the large majority of the people understand? The right hon. gentleman—if I may say so—has shown how small a hold he has upon the mass of the Maltese when he says that they only know two languages, both of which are Italian.

Mr. Chamberlain.—Seven out of ten.

Sir H. Campbell-Bannerman.—And yet the proceedings in the Courts are to be conducted in one of two languages, both of which are unintelligible to the people?

Mr. Chamberlain.—The right hon. gentleman has stated the matter perfectly accurately. The Maltese language is really a *patois*, or taal, and, I believe, is inadequate as a language to be used in the Courts. At all events, since the British occupation Italian

has been used in the Courts, and now the only change we have made is that where a British subject is concerned English shall be used in the Courts in a criminal case, and may be used in a civil case. But in no case is the Maltese language to be used in the Courts, and if it is, it is to be interpreted by an Italian interpreter. The same position prevailed in the Transvaal.

Sir H. Campbell-Bannerman.—Is that a good example to cite? (Hear, hear.)

Mr. Chamberlain.—I am only quoting it for the particular purpose of answering the right hon. gentleman. Dutch was used in the Transvaal, but the people who spoke the taal of the Transvaal did not necessarily understand Dutch, and the taal is not used in the Courts. In the same way the Maltese, or taal, is not used in the Courts except to be translated into the literary language of Italian. There is one correction which I wish to make. By a slip I said that Lord Carnarvon was the Colonial Secretary in 1887; I meant to say Lord Knutsford.

Mr. Boland said that, on the understanding that the proclamation would be withdrawn, he asked leave to withdraw the amendment.

The amendment was withdrawn.

“THE TIMES,” JAN. 30, 1902.

The debate on Malta has served a useful purpose by giving Mr. Chamberlain one of those opportunities he knows how to use. A group of politicians in the island have been manufacturing a grievance for some time past out of what is called the “language question,” and on Tuesday one of the Irish Nationalist members sought to assist them by moving an amendment to the Address. Mr. Chamberlain demolished the alleged grievances very completely and declared that on the main issue involved—the right, namely, of Maltese parents to choose whether their children should be taught English or Italian, in addition to Maltese—the Government were determined to adhere to their decision “at all hazards and against all opposition.” But with regard to a measure of secondary importance—the proposed substitution of English for Italian as the language of the Courts several years hence—they have seen their way to make a concession. They have resolved to withdraw the proclamation which declared the intention of the Government that, when the time came, this change should be carried out. They are content to leave the settlement of the language of the Courts in the future to be determined by the future language of the island. Mr. Chamberlain makes no secret that in his conviction that language will be English and not Italian, in addition, of course

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to Maltese; so that the withdrawal of the proclamation will probably be of no substantive moment. It was, however, intended to have, and it has already had, a result outside Malta which the British people will hail with sincere gratification. The proclamation had hurt the susceptibilities of a nation with which since its birth our relations have been particularly close and friendly. The Italians are naturally proud of "one of the most beautiful and classic languages in the world." They fancied that they saw in the proclamation an attack upon that language. We believe that they misunderstood our action, as assuredly they misunderstood our purpose. But the people of England would be grieved to hurt the feelings of a race to whom they are bound by so many ties, even though they think that their own conduct was free from all legitimate reproach. They agree with Mr. Chamberlain that a good feeling between the two nations is a "national asset for both" and that no efforts should be spared on our part to remove any misapprehension which might lessen the sympathies that have so long existed between them. They will be touched and gratified by the very remarkable outburst of good will with which the action of the Government in withdrawing the proclamation has been hailed by all sections of the Italian Press. They will be pleased to learn from the official "Tribuna" that this was in truth a "graceful concession" to our friends, of which the grace is enhanced as that journal points out, by the fact that it is not the fruit of discussions between Rome and London, but a spontaneous act of courtesy and consideration to the sentiment of our old allies. We may regret that owing to the errors of our diplomacy a cloud should have arisen between us, which we could not dispel without a sacrifice in what are clearly the internal affairs of the Empire. But we make that sacrifice with cheerfulness, and the fact that we do so, when it lies in such a sphere, is the best proof of the esteem and regard we cherish for Italy.

The merits of the controversy with the Maltese agitators are perfectly clear. The population of the island are, and always have been, heartily loyal to the Empire into which, as a striking inscription over the main guard opposite the Governor Palace proclaims, they voluntarily entered a century ago. The great mass of them do not speak or understand either English or Italian. Their native tongue is a patois of Arabic unintelligible beyond their own shores. It is unfitted for the transaction of legal business. Under the Knights of Malta legal decisions and many deeds and documents were in Latin. After the British occupation Italian, which was then the literary language best known in

the island, was adopted in the Courts. As time has gone by during which Malta has been the station of a great British garrison, a great naval port, and a great commercial port, English has naturally become more useful to the majority of the people than Italian, while the number of English-speaking suitors in the tribunals has greatly increased. Until recently no adequate measures had been taken to meet this change in the situation. Quite lately a British officer was committed to gaol—though he was not actually imprisoned—by one of the Maltese Courts for refusing to sign a deposition in Italian which he did not understand. That scandal drew attention to the grievance of English suitors, and it was enacted by Order in Council that English prisoners should be tried in English and that civil suits where one of the parties was English might be so tried. Opportunity was taken at the same time to give Maltese parents the right of having their children taught English or Italian in the schools as they might choose. They quickly showed that they appreciated the privilege. Absolutely no compulsion was put upon them by the authorities. They make their choice every year, and the return in the Blue-book published last summer shows how they made it for 1893, 1899, and 1900. The proportion who elected for English was 95.4, 97.1, and 98.5 for the three years. As Mr. Chamberlain says, their choice was a matter of course. They knew that it was to the interest of their children to learn the greatest commercial language of the world and the language most immediately useful to them in the daily business of their lives. Then came the agitation, in which, as Mr. Boscawen pointed out, the agitators had to harangue their hearers in Maltese because the latter would not have understood them in Italian. All sorts of monstrous fables as to the objects of the change were invented and circulated, and these tactics for a time bore some fruit. The percentage fell to 75 per cent., but a recovery has set in and it has again risen to 80 per cent. The Government are resolved to do their plain duty by this great majority of the population and to uphold for them their freedom of choice in spite of the dictation of the little band of agitators. No other course was open to them, and no other course would have been tolerated by English opinion.

These gentlemen, or some amongst them affect to take themselves very seriously. They talk about their right to self-government and to the administration of their own affairs. Under the Constitution of 1887 they have a majority in the Council of Government. They have abused their position by refusing to vote

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the necessary taxation. Even yesterday, after the news of Mr. Chamberlain's speech had reached them, they only condescended to vote a month's supply for education, and they expressed the hope that the concession made by the Government extended to that subject. It was quite time to teach them their place, and unless they are very foolish persons they will learn it from Mr. Chamberlain. The Government, as he warned them, cannot allow the "childish game" in which the agitators are engaged to go on in a great Imperial fortress. The elected members are quite insignificant persons. The electorate is very small, and only a very small proportion of the electorate takes the trouble to vote. Yet the small local politicians chosen in this fashion have deliberately and avowedly set themselves to work to bring the government of Malta to a standstill. The islanders, and the great body of British soldiers and sailors who are constantly there, have been saved from serious injury at the hands of these men only by the exercise of the right possessed by the Government to legislate over their heads. That right Mr. Chamberlain tells them, will be freely exercised if they continue to be recalcitrant. If they continue too long, a further step may be taken. The Duke of Wellington thought it as unreasonable to give a constitution to Malta as to give a constitution to a man-of-war. We have given her a constitution, but if she persists in reducing it to a farce, the question will arise whether, in the interests of the Empire as well as in the interests of the Maltese themselves, we should not revoke it.

THE LANGUAGE QUESTION.

"SATURDAY REVIEW," FEB. 1, 1902.

If Mr. Chamberlain is sometimes accused of irritating foreign nations unnecessarily, now and again he is peculiarly successful in pleasing them. "In the history of the British Parliament" says the 'Tribuna' "was written yesterday the most beautiful page of the record of the relations between the British and Italian Governments." Both in its length and in its subject matter Mr. Chamberlain's speech on the language question in Malta was quite unexpected. The little agitation in Malta had seemed a thing of the past and in the first instance it was got up only by a clique of Italian lawyers who made money by their monopoly of Italian. The language of the Maltese people is not properly Italian and the British Government allows every parent to decide if his child, who naturally begins by learning Maltese, shall afterwards be instructed in English or Italian. Mr. Chamberlain's original proclamation that English should

replace Italian as the official language in fifteen years' time laid down an almost necessary regulation for a British colony, and it was suggested by the case of an English officer who was sent to prison because he would not sign a document in a foreign tongue. The sudden withdrawal has gratified Italy beyond measure; but it could only have been made by a strong member of a strong party and not with impunity by him. If he has pleased our allies, he has put a premium on captious intrigue.

MALTESE GRATITUDE.

"THE GLOBE," FEB. 22, 1902.

For some time past the arrogant vestrymen who compose the greater part of the Maltese Council have been trying to curry favour with the more excitable portion of their constituents by refusing to vote the supplies necessary for the administration of the island. Not unnaturally, the Governor has been obliged to warn them that if they persist in this policy of cutting off their nose to spite their face it will be necessary to make some change in the Constitution of the island, and their reply has been to resign in a body. In the Governor's warning they affect to see "ill-advised violence" and "masked autocracy." The whole thing would be too childish to deserve any attention if it did not constitute a significant comment on the surrender of the Home Government to their demands on the language question. In response to the agitation of a few busybodies, Mr. Chamberlain allowed himself to be persuaded into withdrawing an Order in Council which, as everyone knows, would have been of the most manifest benefit to the Maltese themselves, and could, at the worst, only have inconvenienced a few pettifogging lawyers for a short time. This is the gratitude he gets in return. These Councillors cannot understand a concession being granted for any other reason, since their vanity is almost as their ignorance. There must be no more nonsense in dealing with them. We hold Malta as a great place of arms for the general benefit of the British Empire, and so long as they do nothing to interfere with its usefulness in that respect and can behave themselves decently, the population are free to govern themselves pretty much as they please. But when they come to refusing to pay their taxes and to embarrassing the Governor in the discharge of his important duties to the Empire, they must be taught their proper place, and we hope Mr. Chamberlain will take the task in hand without delay.