

## THE PRESIDENT AND THE NEWSPAPERS.

It has been said in some quarters that President Cleveland made a mistake, or committed some sort of indiscretion, in speaking as he did about the newspapers in his speech at the Harvard dinner. We have not been able to share in this view, for two reasons. One is, that the fitness of what a man says in a speech has to be measured in some degree by the way in which his audience receives it. The other is, that what the President said was true, and was called for in the interest of both political and social morality.

No man in the United States has ever addressed an audience of a better quality, as regards either intelligence or patriotism, than the President addressed on Monday week at Cambridge, and it came from all parts of the country. No part of his speech was delivered with as much feeling and emphasis as that relating to the press, and this might have been awkward for him if it had been addressed to disapproving or unsympathetic hearers. As a matter of fact, however, to no part of the speech was the response of the audience so hearty and enthusiastic. It seemed to touch an answering chord in the breast of every man in the room, and was greeted with vehement and long-protracted applause. All who were listening to him seemed to share the emotion with which he alluded to the way in which he and his family had been pursued by the newspaper "ghouls." They felt for him and with him as the victim of newspaper enterprise. What such an assemblage received in such a way cannot have been a mistake of any kind. On the contrary, we need no other proof that it was the right thing said at the right time and in the right way. To have called forth from such a body of Americans such hearty condemnation of "journalism" as practised by a portion of the American press, was, indeed, a great public service.

In the second place, there is no question anywhere of the truth of what he said. Every one acknowledges this. No better illustration of it could be furnished than the fact that since he said it the worst offenders have formed a sort of Syndicate of Blackguardism, for mutual defence and support. The chief members of it are the *Sun*, the *Tribune*, the *Mail and Express* (Cyrus W. Field's paper), the *World*, and the Brooklyn *Eagle*. Every one of these has felt the Presidential lash, and is writhing under it, tough as their hides are. So they are now feeling a common shock at the indelicacy of his attack on them, and at the absurdity of his objecting to their mode of making money and gratifying their malice. As they have no one else to quote in support of their positions, they quote each other. Each says ditto to all the rest. As a general rule the press of the country recognizes the abuse of the system of news-gathering of which the President has been the victim, so that the members of the Syndicate really find nobody to cite in extenuation except the companions of their guilt. Dick acquits Tom and Harry acquits Dick, and they try to be jocose over their wretched plight. But the scandal-mongering and prying branch of journalism has none the less received a check. The public

indignation over it has been long rising, and has not been assuaged by any demonstrations, however ostentatious, of its pecuniary profitableness. In fact, this indignation has been deepened thereby, and all it needed was some powerful and fearless voice, like the President's, to give it expression. The result shows what a staggering blow he delivered when he turned on them in honest human shame and wrath.

Some members of the Syndicate are now trying to bolster themselves up under the effect of James Russell Lowell's splendid tribute to the President's honesty and courage, by taking up the wretched Hawthorne business, and pretending to believe Mr. Hawthorne rather than Mr. Lowell, when Mr. Hawthorne says that Mr. Lowell knew he had come to interview him. The way they are working this matter up is really amusing as an example of depraved ingenuity. One of their assumptions is, that Mr. Lowell's refusal to furnish English gossip to the *World* himself shows that he must have meant to furnish it to Hawthorne for the *World*. There is probably nobody, whether blockhead or knave, outside the "journalistic profession," who would have the hardihood to print a bit of reasoning of this sort. Decent people in other callings, of course, see that Mr. Lowell's refusal was full notice to Hawthorne that there would be no use in trying to get out of him through an interview what he was not willing to furnish through his own pen, and a full assurance to himself that Hawthorne came to him simply as a friend. It is, therefore, corroborative evidence of the strongest kind that Hawthorne went to his house and sat at his table in disguise, and, not daring to produce his note-book, tried to remember the careless chat of an old friend, in order to convert it into journalistic "hash" and sell it to a dealer. The controversy itself deserves no further notice. But the use made of it by the Syndicate shows how true the President kept his rudder when his galley dashed in among the journalistic bumboats at Harvard.

## "THE CURSE OF PATRONAGE."

THE examination which Democratic politicians and organs are making into the causes of their party's defeat where it suffered reverses in the recent elections, proves to be one of the most impressive lessons as to the wisdom of civil-service reform which have yet been taught the country. A great mass of unimpeachable Democratic testimony is being collected which establishes beyond question the fact that the spoils system has been the chief cause of all their troubles. "The curse of patronage did the business," says Chauncey F. Black, the Democratic candidate for Governor of Pennsylvania, in explaining his defeat, "and the same cause was operative all over the country, just as it was here."

The correctness of Mr. Black's diagnosis is established by the results of the election in States where the effect of the spoils policy and of the reform system has been clearly contrasted. In Massachusetts the President lived up to its professions in the treatment of public office as a public trust; in Indiana and Virginia he yielded to the demands of the politicians

that places in the civil service should be treated as the rewards of partisan service. In Massachusetts the Democrats reduced the Republican plurality from 24,000 two years ago to less than 10,000, and made a net gain of two Congressmen; in Indiana and Virginia the Democrats lost their plurality of 1884 on the popular vote and almost half their Congressmen. There is no disputing the logic of such results, and honest Democratic newspapers, like the *Montgomery (Ala.) Advertiser*, frankly confess that they constitute a "boom for civil-service reform."

Spoilsmen who attempt to hold the President responsible for their own defeat, unwillingly bear witness to the harm which patronage has done their party. Congressman Barbour of Virginia set out the other day to saddle the blame for the result in his State upon Mr. Cleveland, and said that the trouble was that the Administration had not been Democratic enough—in other words, had not given out the offices rapidly enough to party workers. But with a delicious naïveté he immediately went on to say: "There has been another thing in Virginia operating against us. What patronage has been given out has raised up a crop of angry men. There were numerous applicants for each Federal office. The men who were disappointed have given us trouble." According to Mr. Barbour's own evidence, therefore, it was patronage itself which made the mischief, and the trouble would only have been greater if the offices had been given out more liberally.

Nobody has more forcibly stated the reasons why patronage harms a party than that uncompromising Pennsylvania Democrat, Solicitor-General Jenks, who talks in this plain-spoken fashion:

"If all the offices in the civil service were turned over to the Democrats at one sweep, there would still be nearly as many disgruntled Democrats as now. For, even then, all the Democrats who think they are entitled to recognition could not be accommodated, and every man disappointed would be an agent of discontent. When the Republicans had the patronage of the Government at their disposal, they had the same trouble. It is simply impossible to dispense patronage to the satisfaction of the politicians. The only way to be without enemies is to be without patronage. Democrats have been opposed in elections not because patronage was sparingly or injudiciously or unfairly dispensed, but because they belong to the unfortunate party in power. In this regard it is a great misfortune to a man to be in power. A man who has no favors to give makes no enemies by giving them; but you cannot bestow favors on the few without making enemies of the many who expect and are disappointed."

This theoretical view of the matter is strikingly confirmed by the practical experience of Mr. Kleiner, an Indiana Democratic Congressman. Mr. Kleiner secured changes in all but one of the 134 post-offices in his district, expecting that his party would be delighted with his course. Instead of the universal satisfaction which he looked for, however, he found that there was no end of complaint. Mr. Kleiner thus illustrates the workings of the system:

"Take a cross-roads post-office with a salary of \$450 a year attached. There are two or three rivals in business, each keeping a little store. Each wants the post-office and makes a hot fight for it, and when the applicant who gets the largest number of residents in the vicinity to sign his petition is given the office, the others sulk and complain. They will say that the man appointed had not done as much for the party as they had respectively. The disappointed ones sympa-

thize with each other, and get the sympathy of relatives and friends, and pretty soon the Congressman finds that he has made enemies because of an appointment that was scarcely considered worth having."

Nor were the post-offices the only source of trouble. There were numberless applicants for foreign missions, consulates, and other offices in the civil service, who thought their Congressman ought to be able to get the places for them, and who held him responsible if he failed, as he must inevitably do in most cases, since there were not offices enough to go round. Mr. Kleiner, who declined a renomination, and is thus able to speak frankly upon the subject, confesses that he has been converted to civil-service reform by his experience. "It is no wonder to me," he says, "that the House was charged with inefficiency last session. The Democratic members were kept so constantly engaged in looking after places for constituents that they had not time to give legislative subjects consideration. I know that I found it impossible to keep the run of current business. The greatest reform that we could bring about would be to free Senators and Representatives from all responsibilities as to the distribution of offices. They should not have anything to do with it."

No feature of the recent elections is more fortunate than the fact that Democrats themselves have thus been brought to see and admit "the curse of patronage." It is no longer a theory of Mugwumps that the spoils system is bad for a party; it is now the confession extorted from Democratic politicians by the results of the recent campaign. It has been demonstrated by the unanswerable logic of figures that civil-service reform "pays" as a political investment, and the spoilsmen find themselves left without any argument.

#### THE PROHIBITION PARTY'S VOTE.

THE impression which the first returns from the recent elections gave, that the Prohibition movement was losing ground, was entirely misleading. It now appears that instead of suffering a diminution, the Prohibitionists have made gains in nearly or quite every State in the Union in which they have a party organization. Returns of the votes for their candidates are still slow in coming to hand, but enough have been received to indicate that the vote which the party gave to St. John in 1884 has been more than doubled this year. We give in the following table the vote as it was cast in the two previous years in the principal Eastern, Middle, and Western States, together with that for this year, so far as it has been received. Most of this year's figures are semi-official and are not likely to vary much from those of the official count. Those for New York State are based upon returns received by the *Voice*, as are those for several of the Western States:

	1884.	1885.	1886.
Maine.....	2,160	.....	3,923
New Hampshire.....	1,571	.....	2,194
Vermont.....	1,752	.....	1,832
Massachusetts.....	9,923	4,714	8,160
Connecticut.....	2,305	.....	4,699
Total.....	17,711	.....	20,808
New York.....	24,999	30,867	35,000
New Jersey.....	6,153	.....	19,579
Pennsylvania.....	15,283	15,046	32,422
Totals.....	46,435	.....	87,001

Ohio.....	11,069	28,081	28,657
Indiana.....	3,028	.....	8,975
Illinois.....	12,074	.....	19,527
Michigan.....	18,403	13,950	35,000
Minnesota.....	4,684	.....	12,000
Totals.....	49,258	.....	104,159
Grand totals.....	113,404	.....	211,968

It will be seen at a glance that, with the single exception of Massachusetts, there has been an increase in every State over the vote cast for St. John. This is the severest test which can be made, for the St. John vote represented something more than prohibition sentiment. Thousands of Republicans voted for him because they could not conscientiously vote for Blaine, and could not make up their minds to vote for a Democrat. Then, too, in many States this year the Republican candidates were either openly committed to prohibition principles, or they stood upon platforms favoring the submission of the question to a popular vote. In Maine the Republican candidate was pledged to support the prohibitory laws, yet even there the Prohibition vote was nearly doubled. It was perceptibly increased in Vermont and New Hampshire, and though it fell off a little in Massachusetts from St. John's vote, it was nearly double that cast last year. In Connecticut it is more than double what it was in 1884.

In the important States of New York and New Jersey the showing of the party is a remarkable evidence of solidity and increasing strength. The figures for New York are based upon actual returns from half the counties, showing slight gains, and seeming to warrant the statement that the total vote will be two or three thousand larger than the very large vote of last year. When we consider that the only State candidates voted for in the last campaign were those for Court of Appeals Judge, and that the fact of there being a Prohibition candidate in the field was hardly recognized outside that party, this outcome is most significant. There was no dissatisfaction with the Republican candidate to account for the large vote, since Judge Daniels was known to be a Prohibitionist, whereas last year objection was made to Mr. Davenport that he was interested in a vineyard. In a very quiet State campaign, with no canvass conducted by any party, the Prohibitionists have polled over 30,000 votes, or about 5,000 more than they polled in 1884, and a few thousand more than they polled in 1885. Their party is evidently compact, and determined enough to give the Republican managers warning not to attempt at Albany this winter the passage of further legislation in the interest of "protection to Republican saloon-keepers."

The most notable figures from this part of the country, however, are those from New Jersey. The Prohibition vote there has risen from 6,153 in 1884 to 19,579 this year. A careful examination of it, which we have made by counties, shows that it is drawn almost entirely from the Republicans. Of course, so long as this loss, or anything like it, continues to be maintained, the Republicans have no hope whatever of carrying the State.

In the five Western States for which we give the figures, the gains of the Prohibitionists are uniform and very large. In an off year, in which nobody expected much of them, the

Ohio Prohibitionists have cast a vote nearly three times as large as they gave St. John, and slightly larger than they cast in the exciting campaign for Governor last year. In Indiana the Prohibitionists have nearly tripled their St. John vote; in Illinois they have increased it from 12,000 to nearly 20,000; in Michigan they have made the State an uncertain one by increasing their vote from 18,000 in 1884 to 35,000 this year, and have done the same thing for Minnesota by advancing from 4,600 in 1884 to 12,000 this year.

All these figures are significant, but when we take them by sections, and then by the country at large, their real meaning becomes more apparent. The increase in New England has been comparatively slight, but it has been sufficient to make Connecticut a hopeless State for the Republicans, and Rhode Island, which we have not included in our list because it held no general election this year, a doubtful one. In the three important Middle States the Prohibition vote has advanced from 46,000 to 87,000, and has gained strength enough to make the two "pivotal" States out of the three, pretty surely Democratic in almost any kind of Presidential contest in 1888. In the West, in five States, four of which have hitherto been strongly Republican, the total Prohibition vote has more than doubled, increasing from 49,000 to 104,000, and making at least two of the Republican strongholds "doubtful" for 1888. Taking now the three groups of States together we find the total for this year to be 211,968, against 113,404 in 1884. The *Voice* estimates the total Prohibition vote in the country this year at about 325,000, against 150,000 for St. John, and the estimate is entirely reasonable. The party has, therefore, more than doubled its numbers within two years, and the gain has come mainly from the Republican ranks.

#### SOME FURTHER ADVICE TO WELL-MEANING PEOPLE.

WE have received several letters from supporters of the George movement, and from friends of "Labor" generally, remonstrating with us vigorously for asking them to furnish specific remedies for the evils they describe in the condition of what we suppose we must call "the working class"—for they insist on being a class—in this country. They particularly object to being asked to embody these remedies in legislative bills, and seem to think it shows a cruel and unfeeling disposition to propose such a thing, and, not only this, but incapacity for seeing the signs of the times. This latter charge is the one on which the purely philanthropic, or what some people have called the "crank," element in the George movement dwells with most relish. Some of them appear to revel in the belief that they see clearly the approach of an immense revolution, resulting in a complete reorganization of society from top to bottom, including the destruction or permanent redistribution of property, to which such wisecracks as the editor of the *Nation* are blind as bats.

With this latter class we do not argue: they are nearly all prophets. Their letters and sermons and speeches are simply predictions of wonderful things such as the world has been made familiar with by thousands of enthusiasts