

THE VETO.

THE President's action in returning to the House without his approval the Dependent Pension Bill is the most striking event of his Administration. His message has undoubtedly killed the measure, and the measure was the most important, the most far-reaching, and the most demoralizing which Congress has sent to the White House since Mr. Cleveland was inaugurated. The veto thus presents him in the character of a careful, wise, and courageous Executive, who, by the exercise of a great constitutional prerogative, has defeated an outrageous scheme which was hastily passed by Congress in a characteristic fit of carelessness, folly, and cowardice.

The message itself is a merciless exposure of what, according to that veteran Republican correspondent, Gen. Boynton, "most of those who supported it are now convinced is a scheme engineered in the main by pension attorneys." Mr. Cleveland shows with the utmost clearness that the bill is so loosely drawn as to put a premium upon fraud on the part of new applicants, and to tempt pensioners receiving less than \$12 a month, who are now partially supporting themselves, to stop working and claim the larger allowance. He points out that the advocates of the bill in the two houses differed widely as to its meaning and consequences. He says that he "cannot believe that the vast peaceful army of Union soldiers who, having contentedly resumed their places in the ordinary avocations of life, cherish as sacred the memory of patriotic service, or who, having been disabled by the casualties of war, justly regard the present pension roll, on which appear their names, as a roll of honor, desire at this time and in the present exigency to be confounded with those who, through such a bill as this, are willing to be objects of simple charity, and to gain a place upon the pension roll through alleged dependence." He enforces the consideration, "sad but nevertheless true," with which the examination of private pension bills has impressed him, "that already in the matter of procuring pensions there exists a widespread disregard of truth and good faith, stimulated by those who, as agents, undertake to establish claims for pensions, heedlessly entered upon by the expectant beneficiary, and encouraged, or at least not condemned, by those unwilling to obstruct a neighbor's plans." He declares that "the race after the pensions offered by this bill would not only stimulate weakness and pretended incapacity for labor, but would be a further premium on dishonesty and mendacity." He shows, by a reference to the consequences of the Arrears Act, how startling is the effect of new invitations to apply for pensions; and, by a reference to the history of the Dependent Pension Bill for Revolutionary soldiers, how ridiculously far below the actual expenditure all Congressional estimates have inevitably fallen. Finally, he refers to the fact that while it has been a cause of pride and congratulation to the American citizen that his country is not put to the charge of maintaining a large standing army in time of peace, yet we are still living under a system of war taxation, which ought to be reduced, but which cannot be re-

duced if this bill becomes a law, "with its tremendous addition to our previous obligations."

There has seldom been a more signal illustration of the wisdom of the fathers in investing the President with the veto power. Here is a bill which was whisked through Congress almost without consideration, on the pretence that it involved only the trifling expenditure of less than \$5,000,000 a year, and in the belief on the part of its supporters that favoring it would insure them the "soldier vote" without offending any other class of voters. If the passage of a measure through each branch of Congress made it a law, there would have been no escape from the demoralizing and long-continued consequences of this piece of demagogism. But the Constitution gives the President ten days to consider every act sent to him by Congress, and makes his veto of a bill effectual unless overruled by a two-thirds vote in each branch. Ten days sufficed for so thorough an overhauling of this measure by the press as conclusively demonstrated that it never ought to have been passed, and for so unanimous a condemnation of its Congressional supporters by public sentiment as to insure the defeat of the scheme upon a reconsideration. The possession of the veto power by a President who is not afraid to use it, thus rescues the nation from the otherwise inevitable consequences of a piece of hasty legislation.

From the standpoint of current politics the veto is hardly less noteworthy than from that of political economy. The Pauper Pension Bill went through both branches of Congress without a word of protest, or even a single negative vote, from all the representatives of the Republican party. Everybody in the country knows that, if the Republican candidate in the last Presidential campaign had been elected, a bill thus supported by the Republican party in Congress would have been signed without a moment's hesitation. But for the last ten days Republican newspapers in all parts of the country have been denouncing the measure in the most scathing terms, and appealing to a Democratic President to save the country from this "extravagant, foolish, and demagogical" measure (to use the words of the *Chicago Tribune*), which went to him with the endorsement of every Republican Senator and Representative. When we remember that only a little over two years ago these Republican newspapers were charging that the election of a Democratic President would ruin the country, the spectacle which has been presented for the past ten days of these same Republican newspapers beseeching this Democratic President to veto a Republican measure, is at once most amusing and instructive.

As to the personal consequences of the President's action, there can be no question in the mind of any candid man. He has been warned that a veto would lose him the "soldier vote," and the organ of the Washington claim-agents has made frantic appeals for his signature that were hardly disguised threats of political revenge in case of a veto. Everybody in the country knows that such arguments would have availed with the Republican candidate in the campaign of 1884, as they availed with so many Congressmen who knew that they ought to vote against the bill. Sundry Republican

organs have emphasized the courage required in Mr. Cleveland's action, by saying that his course in this matter would be a test of his mettle; that while it was easy enough to veto a private pension bill which had but few friends, it would be quite another thing to block a scheme pushed by such powerful influences as were behind this measure. The concluding sentence of the message is the President's reply, and it is such an appeal to the patriotism and justice of the American people as cannot fail to elevate its author in the estimation of every right-thinking person:

"The evil threatened by this bill is in my opinion such that, charged with a great responsibility in behalf of the people, I cannot do otherwise than to bring to the consideration of this measure my best efforts of thought and judgment, and perform my constitutional duty in relation thereto, regardless of all consequences, except such as appear to me to be related to the best and highest interests of the country."

THE DUTY OF THE ASSEMBLY COMMITTEE.

WE trust the Assembly Committee now investigating the strikes in this city will not fail to examine Quinn and other leaders as to the machinery by which the strikes are supported. This is really the most important branch of the investigation. The other matters to which the Committee have been addressing themselves—such as the cost of mining and transporting coal, and the rate of wages paid by the companies, and the disputes between the workmen and the corporations out of which the late strikes have arisen—are comparatively unimportant, because the facts lie so near the surface. Any newspaper reporter can get at them. What most seriously calls for legislative inquiry is the internal machinery by which the strikes are carried on, because this is both a novelty and a mystery. Formerly a strike was simply the refusal of the men working under a particular employer, or in a particular trade, to work any longer unless certain specific and published demands on the employer were complied with. The strike, too, was almost always preceded by negotiations which gave it the character of a business transaction, and it was managed by men in the trade and familiar with its needs and possibilities.

Under the new system which the Knights of Labor are seeking to establish, this is all changed. A secret and irresponsible body has been set up in this city, which exercises the power of ordering sympathetic strikes—that is, of "calling out" the workers in any trade it pleases, whether they have a grievance or not, with the view of producing widespread social disorganization, and thus coercing the whole community, as it were, into helping to make effective the decrees of this hidden despotism. One result of this system is, of course, to make strikes when ordered extremely large. Thousands are thrown out of employment in order to aggravate a dispute in which only hundreds are directly interested, and great misery is indirectly inflicted on thousands of others by enhancing the price of commodities and causing general business depression, postponing investments and driving capital away. Another serious feature of sympathetic strikes—and to this we would especially call the at-

tention of the Committee—is the fact that they are training large bodies of American citizens in the habit of blind obedience, in the performance of the most important acts of their lives, to unknown persons. One of our morning contemporaries the other day, while condemning the strikes as foolish, lauded this blind obedience of those who were “called out” as a splendid example of devotion and discipline on the part of poor men. In reality, however, it is a very alarming political phenomenon. It makes the organization known as the Knights of Labor distinctly hostile to American institutions. Any organization, whether ecclesiastical or civil, whether church or order or brotherhood, which teaches men to regulate their lives under commands for which no reason is given them, or, in other words, to lead the lives of soldiers in the midst of peace, under authority unknown to the law of the land, is undoubtedly dangerous to the state. It is absurd to perorate against the Catholic Church or the Mormon Church while such an organization as the Knights of Labor is in active operation among us. To encourage such an organization in teaching large bodies of men to obey without reasoning, without discussion, without knowing or asking the reason why, is to contribute in a greater or less degree to the overthrow of our present system of government. For they delude themselves grossly who suppose that if the Knights or any similar organization became strong enough to put society in peril, society would surrender at discretion and let itself be reorganized by the Powderlys and Quinns. On the contrary, as the history of civilization everywhere shows, society would defend itself with the special weapons which the danger seemed to call for. It would modify its government to suit the occasion. It would meet a little despotism with a big despotism, and would pursue Master Workmen with colonels and generals, and, when it caught the Walking Delegate “calling out” anybody, it would lock him up in jail, without benefit of clergy or privilege of habeas corpus. In short, it would sacrifice its liberty in order to secure peace and tranquillity.

Though last not least, the sympathetic strikes call for money contributions on a scale never known in strikes before. The number of people they make dependent on assessments levied on workingmen who are not “called out,” is unprecedentedly large. The beneficiaries and contributors of this fund in such strikes as this last one of the longshoremen and coal-handlers are in the main ignorant and simple men. Probably the large majority of them are either unable to read or write, or only do so with difficulty. They have no familiarity with accounts or with the usages of the business world in the matter of receiving and disbursing other people's money. It is needless to point out to the Committee, therefore, the immense opportunities for frauds on a great scale which every one of these strikes offers. In all of them large sums of money are received in small amounts by persons themselves impecunious and without credit, who publish no receipts, and render no accounts, and disburse it in such manner and at such times as they think proper. If a man were to start a

savings bank or a charitable association on this plan, no matter who he was, he would soon be called to an account, especially if, like “Putnam,” or Quinn, the great strike leader, he was a hackman in winter and drove an ice-cart in summer, or, like the other Quinn, he was a bookbinder, who had abandoned his trade in order to reorganize modern society.

The Assembly Committee, we trust, will see in this last consideration, if not in the others, good reason for getting the managers of District Assembly 49 before them, and asking them such questions about the receipt and distribution of the money raised in aid of the late strike as will satisfy the public on the point whether these sympathetic strikes are not instruments of fraud on a great scale, of which manual laborers, or, in other words, a very poor class of the community, are the sole victims, and enable the Committee to report in favor of some remedial legislation. What this legislation should be, seems obvious enough. The daily publication of the assessments received, with the names of the donors, and of the amounts disbursed, with the names and residences of the recipients, should be made compulsory, and the Board of Arbitration should be charged with the duty of auditing the accounts. There is so little arbitration going on that it would have plenty of time for this purpose. If the Legislature fails to take this matter up, it will be guilty of a great wrong towards a very helpless class.

THE POPE'S INTERFERENCE IN GERMANY.

Nothing more singular has occurred in European politics within the present century than the direct interference of the Pope in the German elections on behalf of the Government. In the first place, we can recall no case in which orders have been openly sent from Rome to the Catholics of a parliamentary country, directing them how to vote on a certain occasion. In all previous occasions of real or suspected Papal interference in domestic politics, the influence has been exerted privately, or at all events indirectly. The word would be passed to the clergy to get the faithful to support this or that candidate, or this or that measure, on the ground that spiritual interests required it; and the clergy would give advice to this effect either from the pulpit or through their parochial visits, abstaining carefully, however, from any mention of higher authority. In fact, in all countries in which parliamentary institutions have been set up or have existed during the present century, either the Protestant feeling or the radical feeling has been so strong that no party could afford to have it known that it enjoyed Papal support. Ireland was long the one exception to this rule, but of late the Pope would not venture even in Ireland openly to call on good Catholics to support a bill in which the Church had no direct interest.

In the second place, the bill which the Pope has chosen to recommend for Catholic support is a very extraordinary one for a foreign ecclesiastic to take under his protection. No measure could well be more secular and domestic in its nature than the army bill which Bismarck

is trying to push through the Reichstag. The majority in the Reichstag have not refused him the number of men he asks for. They have simply refused to allow the control of the army to pass out of their hands for more than three years, while he asks them to surrender it for seven. In surrendering it for even three years, they would be going beyond constitutional usage. In other parliamentary countries the army is voted every year for one year and no longer. The concession of the German Parliament is, therefore, really very great, and it is made out of deference to the wishes of the three old men who have founded the German empire. But whether this concession is sufficient for the safety of the empire, or whether it is too great for the interests of constitutional government, are questions on which only Germans are qualified to pass; and any German who passes on them under the influence of any but German considerations—that is, who thinks, in voting on them, of anything but the safety, honor, and welfare of the German nation—is, of course, a bad citizen.

Cardinal Jacobini, however, in advising Catholics to support the Septennate, does not pretend that either the Pope or he knows anything about the matter, except that the adoption of the Septennate would please Bismarck, and render him more disposed to make concessions to the Church in the legislation touching Church property and discipline. More extraordinary still, the Cardinal proposes, as the means of softening Bismarck towards the Church, that Catholics should largely increase his powers as a fighting man. What Bismarck complains of is, that the facilities at his disposal at present for killing French Catholics are not sufficient, and must be improved, and his control of them made more absolute. In asking for this, too, he enlarged on the difficulties of killing Frenchmen, on the vigor with which they resisted attempts to kill them, and on their sensitiveness about preparations made for that purpose. Nevertheless, in the teeth of his account of French pride and valor, he declared that the increase of the army as a threat against Frenchmen would increase the chances of peace. There is probably not a man in Germany who agrees with him in this, or who does not feel that these vast military preparations in Germany are gradually overcoming French reluctance to fight, and throwing France into the hands of a new military dictator. But the Pope and Cardinal Jacobini and the German Catholic bishops affect to believe that by enabling Bismarck to make an immense display of bullying, the French will be cowed into peaceableness, or, as the Cardinal says, “the danger of war will be averted in the near future.”

It would be difficult to conceive of odder work for ministers of peace, or an odder way of hastening the establishment of the Kingdom of Heaven on earth. Of all sorrowful sights of the modern world, the French and German armaments are the most sorrowful. When one thinks of the purposes for which these vast hosts are intended, and of the scenes we shall witness when they are brought into collision and their deadly science set to work, one naturally expects them to fill the soul of a successor of the Apostles with inextinguishable horror, and make him feel that the first and best work of