

THE PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE.

THE message sent to Congress by the President recommending an addition to the Retaliation Act, so that the transshipment of Canadian goods in bond across our territory may be inhibited unless Canada shall allow our fishermen to transship their catch across Canadian territory, calls attention to a glaring fault in the present Retaliation Act, and refutes the charge that the Administration, throughout the fishery dispute, has been seeking to advance British interests at the expense of American interests. The latter charge has been shown by Mr. W. L. Putnam to be absolutely false. Mr. Putnam proved by citations from the record that the present Administration, having to deal with the same problem that Gen. Grant's Administration had to deal with in 1870, and having the same class of seizure cases on hand, had exhibited far greater energy and assiduity in defending the interests of our fishermen. But the indifference of our people at large to these details is such that not one in one hundred of the voters will ever read them or care anything about them. But they can understand a single concrete fact like that stated in the President's message, namely, that the Senate, which has been rumbling for two years against Canada and Great Britain, for the entertainment of Ireland, and threatening retaliation and non-intercourse, and declaring that the fishery dispute was not a subject for treaty negotiation at all, has neglected the most important branch and the most appropriate form of retaliation all the way through. Regarded as a "move for position" merely, the President's message is worth all the speeches and reports of Messrs. Frye, Edmunds, and Hoar, and all the rhetorical exercises of Mr. Evarts, ten times over.

Regarded as a step seriously taken to secure a valuable right, the message is also weighty and important. Among all the privileges claimed by us and denied by Canada, that of transshipment in bond is the one which has the best foundation in reason. It is quite true that it was not conceded in the Treaty of 1818, under which we are now living. It is true, nevertheless, that it is the correlative of the privilege that we extend to Canada of transshipping her goods across our territory from Portland, Boston, New York, and numberless other places. There is nothing in the realm of reason or in the nature of things to distinguish fish from any other kind of portable property. You cannot in this case make fish of one and flesh of another. A long line of precedents tending that way does not suffice. The precedents only serve to show how long a bad principle may survive in spite of the amelioration of manners and the enlarging comity of nations. The privilege of transshipment is necessarily a mutual one. If we are denied the privilege as to one thing by Canada, we may rightfully deny it to her as to all things. Moreover, the denial of the right of transshipment is the appropriate mode of retaliation for that particular grievance.

The President makes mention of the in-

convenience that may be suffered by citizens of the United States. There are a number of American railways engaged more or less in carrying Canadian goods in bond. Some of these earn freights on such goods all the way from the Atlantic seaboard to Manitoba. There are other American railways (the Canada Southern for example), whose earnings are derived from the carrying of American goods across Canadian territory. Both classes will be sufferers from retaliation of this sort. Both will have to thank the Senate for precipitating a crisis by rejecting a treaty which promised peace and good will to both countries.

It is too early to foretell the action of the Republican Senators in answer to the President's flank movement. If they pass a bill of the kind recommended by him, they acknowledge their laches in the past. They take their place in the rear of the procession and follow his lead. This will be a sorry exhibition to make. Even Ireland might be provoked to laughter by it. On the other hand, not to pass the bill will put them in the attitude of refusing to the President the most appropriate and effectual remedy that can be imagined to meet the most substantial grievance we have to complain of. Senators Edmunds, Sherman, and Hale gave us on Friday their opinions and comments on the President's message. Before noticing these important deliverances it is necessary to take a retrospective glance. In the first place the Retaliation Act of 1887 was in principle a reversal of all the precedents in our history applicable to non-intercourse with foreign Powers. It was likewise in conflict with the spirit of the Constitution, which, by giving the war-making power to Congress exclusively, gives to Congress the discretion of judging what steps shall be taken of a hostile character which may lead up to war, and when they shall be taken. Until the passage of this act, Congress has in all such cases assumed the responsibility, and in no case has sought to shift it upon the President. In the Retaliation Act of 1887, however, the precedents were abandoned, and the policy reversed. Instead of declaring non-intercourse upon a given state of facts, Congress authorized the President to declare it if any acts should be, or if any *had been*, committed by the Canadians to justify so grave a step. The acts which had been committed were as well known to Congress as to the President. As a matter of fact, the most objectionable of the acts complained of had been committed prior to the passage of the Act of 1887. It is plain, therefore, that Congress, to use a common illustration, was seeking to "hit it if it was a deer, and miss it if it was a calf." It was seeking to claim all the glory of retaliation if it turned out well, and to put all the blame on the President if it turned out ill. In the former case, retaliation would have been enacted by a wise and courageous Congress. In the latter, the President would have misjudged the occasion, and mistaken the kind of acts calling for so extreme a remedy. The latter charge would have acquired greater force by reason of the fact that no acts were committed by Canada af-

ter the passage of the act more objectionable than those committed before.

Now, the gravamen of Senator Edmunds's argument is, that the President had all the power necessary before he sent in this message asking for new and different powers, and that he has simply come over to the Senate's side and acknowledged that the Senate was right all the time. The President affirms that an unrevoked law of Congress authorizing the transshipment of Canadian goods in bond stands in his way. Leaving this question of fact to be settled as it may be, what, we ask, was Congress doing all those years that it did not exercise its own powers by declaring the time and measure of non-intercourse? Why did it not show the bravery and candor of the Congresses of 1808, 1809, and 1811, and perform its own duty in the spirit of the Constitution? Simply because it was engaged in a game of political fencing.

Senator Sherman, if he is correctly reported, made a greater blunder than any other who took part in the debate. He said that "if the President had based his treaty on the principles laid down in his message, there would have been no difficulty about the treaty, and it would have been ratified by a unanimous vote, because the message did assert the right of American citizens." This remarkable saying comes from one who signed a report from the Senate Committee on Foreign Relations, which contains the solemn declaration that the subject-matter of the fisheries is not one for treaty negotiations at all! But it appears that if the President had negotiated a treaty providing that if Canada did not within a certain number of days allow our fish to be transshipped in bond across her territory, we should forbid her to transship her goods across our territory, then and in that case the fishery question would have been a good subject for treaty negotiation!

Upon the whole, the advantage lies with the President in an overwhelming degree. If serious trouble grows out of the complication, let the responsibility rest with those who have publicly declared against any negotiation whatever, and who have rejected the treaty not merely because it was in their belief a bad one, but because they would not have even a good one.

THE EDUCATIONAL VALUE OF THE PRESENT CAMPAIGN.

It has long been a commonplace with political observers that the preservation of a government founded upon universal suffrage depends upon the education of the voters. No one can dispute the truth of this proposition, but if we consider what is meant by the term education, we shall find much difference of opinion. It is rather hastily assumed that education is the same thing as going to school, and it is inferred that special political instruction should be given to the children attending our common schools. To this end there have of late years been prepared a number of manuals of diluted constitutional law and primers of elementary social science, by the aid of

which it is supposed that good citizens may be produced systematically.

Unquestionably it is desirable that all citizens should be acquainted with the nature of the government under which they live, and we have no disposition to depreciate the efforts of those who attempt to give them this information. But political education is a very different matter from this. It is not acquired by committing to memory the details of governmental machinery or by learning political maxims by rote. In fact, there is little that is peculiarly political about it. It is quite as practical as business education, and as little capable of being taught in schools. It consists simply in applying reason to the constantly varying problems of legislation. It implies a natural or a developed capacity for logical investigation. So far as schooling trains the powers of observation, of generalization, and of deduction, it prepares the scholar for the intelligent discharge of political duties. Unless the common schools give this training, they do not impart a political education. As a matter of fact, a lad may be graduated with a very considerable knowledge of the features of our Government, and yet be wholly unable to pass judgment upon any act of legislation or to vote intelligently on any issue.

Altogether the most valuable political education is furnished by just such a campaign as that in which we are now engaged. A specific measure of legislation has been proposed in order to cure a particular evil—to meet a particular condition, as President Cleveland says. This measure, however, not only relates to this condition, but necessarily brings up for discussion the general scope and policy of government. It calls forth the most contradictory statements as to its immediate effects and as to its general tendency. A great many speakers and writers are engaged in belauding the issue, and in misrepresenting the nature of the measure. A great many others are as busily engaged in refuting them, and in defining and explaining the real principles involved. The general public is, as it were, in the jury-box. It hears all the evidence, and listens to the inconsistent statements of the witnesses and the conflicting arguments of the counsel. It is placed in a position to exercise a rational judgment, and the exercise of judgment is itself an education.

No believer in popular government can contemplate the present state of affairs without exultation. For many years there has been little that was educational in our politics. The old parties had ceased to represent any distinct principles, and the old leaders were decidedly unwilling that principles should be made an issue. The Republicans declared that their candidates should be elected because their party was in power during the war, and the Democrats declared that their candidates should be elected because they were better than those of the Republicans. There was plenty of feeling developed in these contests. There were abundant appeals to hatred and revenge, to pride and prejudice and jealousy. But there

was very little that appealed to the reason; that compelled voters to think and study and reason with one another. Neither the question whether one set of office-holders was better or worse than another, nor the question which of these sets would be the least treacherous in supporting civil-service reform, was interesting as a subject of rational investigation and discussion. Even the last campaign, which involved the important political question of the proper qualifications of a chief executive officer, necessarily aroused so much personal bitterness that the value of the political lesson was very much diminished.

But, thanks to the honesty and courage of the President—qualities which, in his case, rise almost to the level of genius—the political intelligence of our citizens is now furnished with a subject worthy of all its latent powers. The theory of government involved in protective tariffs is no longer to be acquiesced in. It is on the defensive, and it cannot be defended by falsehood, no matter how shamelessly proclaimed, nor by money, no matter how lavishly expended. Such means may be temporarily successful, but permanent success can be attained only by valid argument. Now that the subject has been brought before them, the mass of the people cannot long be deceived or corrupted. The issue is not of a character to arouse passion except in the breasts of protected manufacturers, and it is of a character to arouse serious thought among all who have to be careful in their expenditures. It cannot be discussed without a very considerable degree of mental exertion. Men cannot attempt to convert one another without being compelled to base their arguments upon the general principles of government, and this process is attended with permanent results. The education thus acquired is not lost; it is not a temporary possession. It will be available for future emergencies.

For many years our voters have done little but follow traditions and memories. They have blindly supported the old parties merely because they love the old party names. Many of them have never thought and never had occasion to think of the principles of popular government, and how they are to be applied and limited. But the question that is now before the American people for their decision will compel them to think on these things, and the effect of their thinking will be felt in the formation of sound habits of political reasoning. Political education of this sort is of so much value as a safeguard to our future that it would be worth purchasing at the expense of some present suffering. The defeat of the Democratic party at the coming election would be disastrous to the country, but it would be far better both for that party and for the country that it should appeal to the intelligence of the country, even if it suffer a temporary defeat, than that it should win a temporary success by avoiding that appeal.

BLAINE'S BLUNDERS.

THE speech delivered by the Greatest Living Statesman at Bangor on Thursday served formal notice upon the country that the issue of the campaign is the position of the Leader of the Party. It was wholly devoted to an effort to explain away one of the ridiculous blunders which its author made as soon as he had reached this country. Mr. Blaine began his explanation with a characteristic misstatement. We place side by side what he really said in this city, as reported in the *Tribune* of August 11, and what he now says that he said, as reported in the *Tribune* of August 24:

WHAT HE SAID.

The wage-workers of Great Britain and Ireland, of England, Scotland, and Ireland, the entire savings to-day that these wage-workers can draw upon in the hour of need in that great kingdom, are not as great as lie to-night in the savings banks of Massachusetts to the credit of the wage-workers of that small State.

WHAT HE SAYS HE SAID.

In a brief speech which I made in the city of New York on the day of my arrival from abroad, I remarked, as illustrating the superior condition of laboring men in the United States, that the wage-workers in the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Ireland did not have in the savings banks of that country as large a sum to their credit as did the wage-workers of the comparatively small State of Massachusetts in the savings banks of that State.

The original statement, it will be seen, referred to "the entire savings" of the wage-workers of Great Britain and Ireland, including, of course, the Friendly and Building Societies, which hold £52,812,281—not, as is now claimed, to the amount "in the savings banks of that country." Mr. Blaine had apparently run across the figures of the private or trustee savings banks, as they are called in Great Britain, which were by the last report £48,885,679, or \$237,877,669; and, ignorantly supposing that these were the only savings institutions existing in Great Britain, and seeing that the amount fell short of the deposits in the Massachusetts savings banks, jumped to his conclusion. Since then he has found out that Great Britain has a post-office savings bank system, the deposits in which considerably exceed those in the trustee savings banks. He has referred to the article on savings banks in the 'Encyclopædia Britannica,' and now revises his statement as follows: "The total amount at the close of last year in both the savings and postal banks of the United Kingdom was, in round numbers, \$520,000,000." The amount in the savings banks of Massachusetts at the close of last year was about \$317,000,000.

Mr. Blaine thus convicts himself of having made a blunder of about two hundred million dollars, but he tries to wriggle out of it by the claim that the proportion of the total deposits made by the "wage-workers" is less in Great Britain than in Massachusetts. In order to substantiate this claim, he goes again to the 'Encyclopædia Britannica.' But he does not say so. Of course not. An "intense American" consult the 'Encyclopædia Britannica'! Perish the thought. What he really did consult was "an authoritative British publication," which, however, by a remarkable coincidence, proved to read very much like a portion of the article on sav-