

THE REAL SHAME OF IT.

It is quite true, as the London *Daily News* remarks, that there is not one assertion in Lord Sackville's letter of which "an honest man need feel ashamed." He has said nothing in it which is not true, and which is not creditable to our Government. Thus, it is true that "any political party which openly favored the mother country at the present moment would lose popularity," and it is also true "that the party in power is fully aware of this fact." It is also true that the party in power is "still desirous of maintaining friendly relations with Great Britain, and is still desirous of settling all questions with Canada." If these things were not true, it would show that the party in power was not fit to direct the policy of a great civilized and Christian people; and if Lord Sackville had denied them, he would have slandered both the party in power and the best portion of the American people.

But, as the French say, every truth is not good to tell. There are truths which are unseasonable, which are not fit to be told to any person, by any person, at all times; and the foregoing truths are not fit to be told by a foreign Minister, during a canvass, to a naturalized citizen, with the view of influencing his vote. Consequently, Lord Sackville's letter was a sad blunder, but it is one of those blunders which really affect nobody but the person guilty of them. It is a serious matter for Lord Sackville. It discredits him, in the eyes of his own Government and in the eyes of his professional brethren, on the point of tact and shrewdness, about which diplomats are most sensitive, and it discredits him the more because he is not new to the country. He has been through more than one Presidential canvass, and must be more or less familiar with the tricks resorted to at such times to influence votes. To write such a letter to an unknown person, therefore, argues unfitness for his place. He has, in other words, committed a small but inexcusable and fatal professional blunder—such as all men have committed some time in their lives, and secretly blush over when they recall them—which is likely to ruin his diplomatic career.

What makes us blush just now, however, is not Lord Sackville's downfall, but the fact that his downfall should—judging from the Republican newspapers—seem to be a fact of such tremendous moment for the American people. The childishness of some of our newspapers has long furnished material for the sneers of foreign critics, but journalists are notoriously sensitive and emotional. What is humiliating in the present situation is that a great party, numbering almost half the American voters, considers, or pretends to consider, Lord Sackville's blunder one of the great facts of American history, and is bringing it to the knowledge of the world as such. Large vans are running around, laden with copies of his letter; it is printed in leaded type, and kept standing, in some papers, alongside of drawings of the British crown. It is receiving all the honor which

could be given to a despatch announcing a great victory by land or sea, or the outbreak of a great foreign war, or a great scientific discovery, or the farewell address of a great statesman; and yet there is absolutely nothing in it, except that an elderly diplomatist of the second rank, appointed long ago on account of his family connections, and noted in several countries for his dulness, has offended his own Government, and that to which he is accredited, by a piece of small stupidity.

We wish we could stop here with saying that one of our great parties was acting as if it were made up of schoolboys or half-drunken laborers on pay-day. We wish we could take Dr. Storrs, or Dr. Armitage, or any of the other Republican divines or moralists into a private room, and say, "Your party, reverend sirs, is behaving in a very silly, childish way about this Sackville letter. You see, of course, yourselves, that it has no national or international importance whatever, and affects nobody but Lord Sackville himself; and you are doubtless ashamed to see so much fuss made about it, because it gives the rest of the civilized world the impression that our political contests are managed by children and their nurses, and that American adults go into retirement between the nomination and the election day." But we cannot stop here. We should have to go on, and add:

"It is not, however, the childishness of this Sackville fuss, reverend sirs, which troubles us most. It is the shameful fact that the letter was obtained from Lord Sackville by a petty fraud of the bunco kind—that is, by false pretences such as are used by the species of impostor known as begging-letter writers. It is a fraud, which, had it induced Lord Sackville to send the writer money, would have exposed the latter, if caught, to a term in the penitentiary, and which, were our law what it ought to be, and what you would doubtless wish to see it, would also send to the penitentiary a man resorting to it in order to influence a great national election. You preach vigorously against this sort of sin in your pulpits every day. You give the most solemn sanctions of theology to the lawyer's dictum that 'fraud vitiates everything.' You would not knowingly, or at all events willingly, allow a man to remain in your church who, you knew, profited by cheating, and rejoiced over it openly and unblushingly because it gave him either dignity or emolument. You would scornfully reject the plea that the end justified the means, and would never admit that, although it was wrong for one man to lie and forge, it was not wrong for another man to make money out of the lie or the forgery, or get a wife by it. Why, then, are you silent now, in the presence of this miserable effort to convert the crime of a petty scoundrel into a huge national disgrace, to fill the chair of the American Chief Magistrate by the aid of the kind of trick by which 'bunco steerers' empty the pockets of simple-minded farmers? Do not put the question smiling by, or tell us

any stories about 'the magnificent history' of the party. Your concern is, not what the party once was, but the things it is now doing. Moralists have to deal with living men and not with dead ones."

A VERY SERIOUS QUESTION.

WE should like to ask intelligent members of the Republican party who are diligent readers of their own party newspapers and campaign documents, a simple question, which we put in good faith and all seriousness. It is this: Supposing that on the first of last July, through an outbreak of war, or some failure in steam or other communication, the reception of books and newspapers from England had ceased, and you were left in ignorance of what Englishmen were saying and thinking, or had been thinking or saying for some time past, about American affairs, how would you decide which way to vote at the coming election?

Again: Supposing you had not made up your mind how you would vote as late as Sunday week, and Lord Sackville's letter, which the *Tribune* is printing in leaded type as a guide to voters, had not seen the light, how would you get along?

As matters now stand, we think it is the duty of every intelligent American to ask himself these questions, and to formulate some sort of answer to them in his own mind. Thus far the canvass on the Republican side has consisted almost wholly of English news—news of what Englishmen are saying or have said about American politics, and news of what wages Englishmen are paying to their workmen. We see very clearly how this operates on the more ignorant Irish. They are expected to express through their vote simply their hatred of everything English, or, in other words, to do everything which they can discover would be disagreeable to Englishmen. Consequently, English news is all they need in the way of political guidance. When they learn what the London *Times* says, and Lord Salisbury says, and the London *Spectator* says, it is all they need to enable them to take action with regard to American affairs in every department. For instance, if the London *Times* said the Government ought to own the telegraph lines, they would know that American telegraph lines ought to remain in private hands; or if the *Spectator* said eggs ought to be taxed, they would know that in America eggs ought to come in duty free. If Lord Sackville said the weather reports in this country were unusually good, they would know that the American Signal Service ought to be abolished.

It must be admitted, therefore, that the Republican managers have, in the present canvass, made what may be considered sufficient provision for the Irish; but what about the Americans, who have no special quarrel with England, and are too busy with their own affairs to occupy themselves with spitting her? The position of this class of Republicans, and in fact of all who confine their reading to Republican newspapers and documents, is to-day most precarious. Our Protectionist friends talk a good deal of the plight we

should be in, "in case of war," if we were dependent on foreign manufacturers for the supply of our leading commodities; but that situation, deplorable as it would be, as they paint it, is nothing to that in which Americans find themselves today, in time of profound peace. It would be bad enough, doubtless, to be dependent wholly on England for our cloth, or our salt, or our arms, or our tools during hostilities, but nearly one-half the American people are to-day dependent on Englishmen for their political ideas, and, if communication with England had been cut off four months ago, would be unable to vote intelligently at the principal American election. This sounds incredible, but it is the literal and exact truth, and a most portentous one as regards the future of our institutions. It constitutes a danger which no commentator on our Government has ever foreseen or pointed out. The wildest alarmist of the last fifty years seems not to have dreamed of it, as among the possibilities of the future, that a great American party would openly declare its inability to construct a system of taxation without the guidance of foreign newspapers, or that any considerable body of native voters would be delivered at a great election from doubt and embarrassment by a rather vapid private letter from a foreign Minister. No American who loves his country, or cares for her future, can, in fact, ask himself to-day without a shudder, "Where should we be if the *London Times* had no articles on American affairs, or if Lord Sackville wrote no letters to strangers?"

We pointed out some weeks ago that the Republican canvass was producing little or nothing but these foreign articles, real or forged; but we supposed at that time that the managers probably had some American ideas about taxation and similar topics in reserve, and would begin to spread them abroad as the canvass approached its close. In this we have been utterly disappointed. As the weeks go by, the reliance on English guidance appears to be greater and greater. Should this very alarming dependence on foreigners for political ideas not be checked, there is, of course, no good reason why we should not see English politicians employed openly to stump the country four years from now, and elect an American President by the simple process of telling the voters that they admire his opponent and desire his success, and regulate our taxation by mentioning the imposts which Englishmen especially dislike.

Of course, our Government might continue to exist under such a system, but it would exist as our shame and not as our glory, and would certainly not exist long in its present form. In case of war with England, it might be necessary to omit an election, and make the President hold over until communication was resumed, which in our opinion would give the Constitution a fatal blow. If the practice of holding over until the *London Times* was heard from were once begun, the silence of the *Times* would undoubtedly be often procured, by purchase or otherwise, towards the expiration of the constitutional term; and the Presidential office be gradually

converted into the football and laughing-stock of foreign editorial writers.

CAMPAIGN "CULTURE."

THE base uses to which party managers are capable of putting "culture," when they get a secure hold of it, is well illustrated by Mr. Cabot Lodge's article in the volume issued for campaign purposes under the title, 'The Republican Party—Its History and Policies.' The article on the Civil Service, which professes to be a history of civil-service reform, is contributed by Mr. Lodge, and he certainly had already displayed the right kind of fitness for the work, by going into Rhode Island to stump the State for a ticket framed by and intended to benefit the defaulting Republican Postmaster Boss Brayton, who stole \$30,000 of Government money and was never prosecuted for it. Mr. Lodge displayed very amusing fervor on his behalf, and thus marked himself out clearly for other jobs of the same kind.

This civil-service article is one of them. We cannot go over all its numerous perversions and evasions, nor are we concerned to defend President Cleveland against all its charges; we wish to notice simply its attack on him because of the number of his removals in places not covered by the law. A gentleman and scholar, as distinguished from a party hack, ought, in common fairness, in laying these removals before the public as evidences of the President's depravity, to have said frankly that most of them were made on the expiration of the officers' terms, and that a considerable number, nearly one-quarter, of the Republicans still remained in office, in the fourth year of a Democratic Administration—a thing unknown since Jackson's day. He ought also to have added that arbitrary removals in these places were never more vigorously carried on, or with more shameless indifference to the opinions of civil-service reformers, than during the four short months of President Garfield's Administration, and notably in the Department presided over by Mr. Blaine. Between March 4 and July 2, 1881, Blaine removed 37 Consuls, out of a total of 180, and these adherents of his own party! An honest gentleman could not write a party pamphlet on the history of civil-service reform without mentioning such facts as these, including the disgraceful use made, at the instigation of the same Blaine, of the Collectorship of New York, within this same period. Such things do not excuse President Cleveland's shortcomings, but they place them before the public in their true light; and this is the only light in which an American of fortune and education or a college graduate ought to consent to place them, to oblige any man or any party.

The same thing may be said of Mr. Lodge's concealment of the fact that President Cleveland's removals were not made among officers appointed for fitness, or appointed without reference to their political opinions from among members of both the great parties. He talks throughout as if the President had found, when elected, the Government service filled with highly trained, carefully selected

officers, whose removal in every case, without cause assigned, was presumptive evidence of evil intent; the fact being that the unclassified service had for twenty-five years been filled exclusively with Republicans, appointed solely for services rendered to the party, or to Senators of the party, and retained in office, in a vast number of cases, through "influence," and without reference to competency; and that such things as President Arthur's appointing his own impecunious uncle to a paymastership in the army at the age of sixty, so that in two years he might retire with a pension, were by no means uncommon.

It is also highly disingenuous of Mr. Lodge to conceal the fact that, as late as 1882, assessments on office-holders were vigorously, openly, and defiantly collected by the Republican Congressional Committee, through Mr. Jay Hubbell. Mr. Lodge's assertion, therefore, that "under Republican Administrations political assessments on office-holders were given up, and the civil servants were, in conformity with the spirit of the law, withdrawn from the business of political management," is simply untrue. The New York Custom-house was never more active in the work of political management than in the canvass of 1884. Of course, it would have been the height of electioneering foolishness to put these reserves and qualifications into a campaign document; but for this reason honorable men usually refuse to write campaign documents which require evasion, equivocation, and misrepresentation. They leave them to the poor devils who need the money which such compositions usually bring.

Mr. Cleveland has certainly not fulfilled the expectations of his supporters in 1884 in the matter of civil-service reform. This is admitted by them all, so that the labors of the Republican orators and writers in proving it seem to be in a considerable degree wasted. At the same time we have no right to object to their calling attention to it in a canvass in which Mr. Cleveland is a candidate for reelection. They have a right to point out that his promises have not been kept, and that many of the old abuses continue to flourish under his Administration. This is legitimate campaign work, but the great use of "gentlemen and scholars" in politics ought to be the doing of campaign work in an honest and loyal way. The party hack may be allowed to say, especially if his bread be dependent on it, that President Cleveland has not only failed to keep his promises, but has aggravated the abuses of the civil service—that he has not only failed to establish tenure during good behavior, but has made more arbitrary and unreasonable removals than any of his predecessors; but the Scholar in Politics ought not to say it. To him the delights of campaign lying, forgery, falsification, exaggeration, or perversion are sternly forbidden. He owes the party no service of this kind. Simple truth should, even in the most exciting canvass, be his highest skill; and if the Republican party be the kind of organization Mr. Lodge says it is, simple truth ought to make it a perpetual object of national love and admiration. Quays may come