

THE administration of President Cleveland has certainly so far agreeably disappointed those people who looked upon the advent of the Democratic Party to power with a dread akin to that with which the New England Federalists at the beginning of this century regarded the election of Jefferson. So far the President has given us in the main a fairly decent and clean administration ; a much better one than we had reason to expect from a Simon Pure Democrat. But to admit this does not at all imply admitting that the country acted well or wisely in restoring Democratic rule. We need not accept the Federalist estimate of Jefferson in order to believe that it was a misfortune to have him elected President over Adams. The conduct of the administration hitherto has belied the golden promises of its more enthusiastic supporters to an even greater degree than it has falsified the bitter prophecies of its foes, and indeed some such outcome was the inevitable result of the incongruous political alliance by which the last campaign was won.

Last fall the Democrats were successful because in two or three pivotal States they were supported by a large number of men who had hitherto acted with the Republicans, but who on this occasion refused to accept the Republican nominee. This is not the place to discuss whether these Republicans had or had not just cause to feel outraged at the action of their party associates in forcing upon them a nomination which, it was known beforehand, would be so bitterly distasteful to them ; we have only to see if the result

of their action has been satisfactory or the reverse. Parenthetically, I would say that I am far from questioning the propriety of bolting in certain cases ; I merely question the expediency of so doing in this particular instance.

A peculiarity in the Independent movement last fall was that those who went over to the Democratic Party did not do so in consequence of having been converted to the principles for which the latter had contended for a quarter of a century, but, on the contrary, took the ground that it was the Democracy which had changed, and had come over to the position occupied by themselves. It seems to be a necessary corollary of this proposition that a man who has for twenty-five years acted in accordance with Republican principles is in so far better than one who has been a Democrat for the same period ; and that therefore the substitution in any public position of an honest and efficient man who has always been a Democrat for an honest and efficient Republican is distinctly a thing to be regretted. Therefore, when the President has in his choice of Cabinet officers, as of Bayard and Endicott, or of ministers to foreign countries, as to France and Italy, merely replaced upright and capable incumbents by men of as high personal character who, during and since the war, have been consistent Democrats, and who have therefore been lifelong opponents of all but the most recent of the movements in which the Independents have taken part, we do not see how the latter can view the change with satisfaction ; while to any man sincerely believing in the past and present of the Republican Party it can only seem an unmixed evil. Certainly no Independent can claim that any one of these changes is for the better unless there is a distinct superiority either as regards integrity or capacity on the part of the new appointee ; and so far is this from being the case, that as a rule the appointments hitherto made have been of men decidedly inferior to the old incumbents in the respects indicated.

The administration took office so recently that we are obliged to judge it mainly by the appointments made, as there has not been time for it to develop a definite policy, except, perhaps, on the subject of Civil Service Reform. Here the President undoubtedly deserves great credit for having done precisely what his Republican predecessor did ; that is, for having obeyed the laws in reference thereto—which laws, we may remark in passing, were made by a Republican Congress. When, for instance, Higgins and

Chenoweth entered into a conspiracy to defraud a Republican applicant of the place to which he was by law entitled, the President promptly reversed the action of his subordinates, and deserves hearty praise for so doing; but he should be severely blamed for permitting these same conspirators to retain office. Again, it is to his credit that there was no return to the old Democratic system of making an immediate and clean sweep of all offices, so as the law would permit. Nevertheless, it must be remembered that the removals have gone on steadily, if quietly, and at a speed which, if continued for the Presidential term at the present constantly accelerating rate, will effect almost as complete a change as if a clean sweep had been made at the beginning. In certain cases, notably in that of the New York postmastership, capable men already in office have been retained; and for this the President has both received and deserved much praise. But these instances have been the exceptions, made for particular purposes, usually to conciliate a particular class of voters. At the same time that the New York postmaster was retained, the surveyor of the port, an almost equally satisfactory public servant, who was quite as little of a partisan, was turned out, and his place filled by a mere second-rate party henchman, an understrapper of County Clerk Keenan's. Any principle on which one of these officers was retained applied equally well to the other, and the reason for the difference in their treatment is plain. The postmaster was a particular favorite with the Independents, to whom Mr. Cleveland owed his election—indeed, he was generally believed to have been in sympathy with their movement—and in plain English his retention in office was simply and solely what politicians would call a "recognition" of the Independent vote. On no other theory can we reconcile the action taken in this instance with the course generally pursued by the administration in regard to the numerous postmasters, who, although perfectly satisfactory, and not "offensive partisans," have been obliged to make way for Democrats in Minnesota, Nebraska, and other States where there is no Independent vote to conciliate. It is a poor rule that does not work both ways; and to offer "offensive partisanship" as the excuse for removing Republicans, while supplanting them all over the country by Democrats of the stamp of Mr. Aquila Jones, can only be set down as a piece of pharisaical cant.

In criticising Mr. Cleveland, it must be remembered that while

in one aspect he is doubtless an entirely independent man, in another he is simply the most important cog in what is familiarly known as the Manning Machine, of which two of his Cabinet officers are also constituent parts, and which in fact derives its name from one of them. The policy of this organization (which is the lineal successor of the long-famed Albany Regency) since Mr. Cleveland became President has been the same as it was during his term as Governor. He and his advisers unquestionably much prefer to do right, other things being equal; but for the last year or two this matter of doing right has been subordinated to a skillful and remarkably successful effort to placate the Independents and more upright Democrats on the one hand, and at the same time to satisfy the politicians and keep them in line and thoroughly enthusiastic. For success in this effort a kind of balance of good and bad appointments and actions has been relied on. Thus Pearson is retained as postmaster, and that obscure and timid protégé of Hubert O. Thompson, Mr. Hedden, is forthwith appointed collector; Messrs. Fairchild and Higgins take office nearly simultaneously; and Judge Endicott is relied upon as an argument wherewith to silence one class of the Administration's New England supporters when they complain of the appointment of that pet idol of another class, the amiable Pillsbury. So it was during the last portion of Mr. Cleveland's gubernatorial career, when, for example, he approved the Reform bills presented by the Special Legislative Investigating Committee, but declined to punish the chief of the offenders whose conduct had made the bills necessary. The most charitable can hardly regard it as merely an unfortunate coincidence that this same chief offender (the head of one of the three rival wings of that peculiar and tripartite fowl, the New York City Democracy) should have been, during the eight months that Mr. Cleveland refrained from taking action on the charges against him, one of the latter's most enthusiastic supporters both for the nomination and the election.

This two-sided policy is due to the make-up of the party. Thanks to its copperhead ancestry, the Democracy can count with certainty upon the support of all the Southern whites, good or bad, no matter how their views differ on public questions; but in the North, until very lately, almost all of its supporters were, and even now the great bulk of them are, drawn from the least intelligent and least virtuous classes of the community. For-

tunately for the country, however, it was found that to insure success it was necessary to do more than merely consult the passions and prejudices of iron-clad Bourbons and ignorant proletaries, and so the leaders very wisely began acting on the advice of that lamented exponent of Democratic principles, the late Fernando Wood, to "pander to the better element." In consequence, there has been for some time, notably last fall, a movement of really excellent voters into the Democracy; and the party leaders have had to bid for the support of these men (who, though most high principled as a class, know little of politics, and are quite easily hoodwinked) by much promise, and a small but still appreciable quantity of performance of good. If, as they stoutly maintain, the Independents have for the last twenty-five years been right, it follows of necessity that their present political bedfellows have up almost to this very moment been wrong; and nothing but the perfection of the machine discipline in the ranks of their old adherents has enabled the Democratic managers to keep the latter in the same line with their new supporters. Of these old adherents, by the way, Mr. Cleveland is, greatly to his credit, far less truly a representative than is his copperhead colleague on the Presidential ticket, a gentleman who seems to be now, as always in the past, most offensively anxious to identify himself with whatever is worst in American politics.

It is impossible here to discuss Mr. Cleveland's appointments at length; I can only briefly refer to the most important, taking the Cabinet first. The cases of Messrs. Bayard and Endicott have already been touched on. No one but an extreme Democratic partisan will rank Mr. Manning with the Republicans who have preceded him in the Treasury Department. On the other hand, it must be acknowledged that naval administration has been the weak point in recent Republican rule, and Secretary Whitney will not have to do very well in order to surpass his predecessors—though his course so far seems to have been dictated less by a wish to reform the navy than by a desire to make political capital. The last Republican Postmaster-General did not leave a happy reputation behind him; but none of his acts began to show the brutal and cynical contempt for every principle of Civil Service Reform that crops out in that preposterous document, Mr. Vilas' famous congressional circular on "Patronage Apportionment." One of the chief counts made by the Independents against the Republicans

has been their support of Mahone; and the first act of Secretary Garland, after having become the chief legal officer of the new administration, was to appear in court on behalf of the Virginia repudiators. His other distinguishing feat has been his remarkable opinion to the effect that a Presidential pardon can override a constitutional amendment.

To speak of Mr. Lamar naturally brings up the question of Southern appointments. The mass of the Northern people now feel no bitterness whatever toward the gallant ex-Confederates of the South. We readily acknowledge that they honestly thought their cause just, and we have nothing but praise for their heroic constancy and brilliant courage. Yet we feel sure that history will declare the War of the Rebellion to be both of all modern wars the most important, and also the one in which the dividing lines between right and wrong were sharpest drawn. A Tory of 1776 had far more right on his side than had a Confederate of 1860. Doubtless most Tories firmly believed their cause right, and after the Revolution they should have been treated as soon as possible like their loyal fellow-citizens. But had this been done, exceptions would of course have been made in some cases—as in that of Benedict Arnold, and those of the men who under Johnson and Butler took part in the Cherry Valley and Wyoming massacre. When Mr. Lamar half-masts the flag out of respect to the unsavory memory of ex-Secretary Thompson, we feel quite as indignant as our forefathers would have been at a similar tribute paid to a follower of Butler or Johnson. So with Jefferson Davis, who enjoys the unique distinction of being the only American with whose public character that of Benedict Arnold need not fear comparison. An item appeared recently in the papers to the effect that a certain office-seeker was relying largely upon a letter in his favor from Jefferson Davis, and as Mr. Lamar has long posed as the professional apologist of the latter, the item was very probably correct. Now a revolutionary patriot might have been very liberal-minded indeed, and yet would scarcely have cared to see a Cabinet officer appointed to whose good graces a letter from Benedict Arnold would have proved a passport. Nor, had the aforesaid patriot voiced his objections, would it have been proper to accuse him of performing that operation which was the post-revolutionary equivalent of “waving the bloody shirt.” We are heartily glad to welcome back the prodigal son, to put him on a complete equality with ourselves, and to give him his full

share of the fatted calf ; but we strongly object to that particular variety of prodigal son who passes his time lamenting that the husks did not hold out longer, and praising the most obnoxious of the companions who led him astray.

Next in importance come the foreign missions. Those to France and Italy have already been spoken of. In England, Lowell's place is filled by a gentleman doubtless most estimable as a lawyer and private citizen, but whose sole record as a public man was his having once made a very foolish and abusive speech against the greatest American of the nineteenth century, Abraham Lincoln. On the principle that among the blind the one-eyed is king, Mr. Pendleton's appointment to Germany was satisfactory, and it was additionally so as being a snub to that most sordid and unlovely body, the Ohio Democracy ; but to compare him to his predecessor, Mr. Karson, is to compare a soft-money copperhead, who did excellently as regards Civil Service Reform, with a hard-money Union man who did fairly well on the same question. Finally comes that purely *bouffe* personage, Mr. Keiley—about the most discreditable diplomatic appointment ever made by the United States—a man equally offensive to the countries to which he was sent, and to that from which he came. Rarely, indeed, is one who openly avows his disloyalty to a government immediately made the representative of that government abroad—although in reference to the open avowal it is but just to say that Mr. Keiley apparently unites so fluent a tongue to so addled a brain that none of his remarks can be taken very seriously.

There is space barely to touch on the minor appointments. Higgins, it was at first said by the President's defenders, was merely an ugly exception. As such he would be wholly unimportant ; but he is all-important now that he has proved to be but the type of a large clan whom the new administration delights to honor. Thomas, for example, recently appointed Indian agent, was a Baltimore politician of the most pronounced Higgins stripe, and his choice goes far to show that Higgins was no accident. Again, in New England the three most important appointments, after that of Judge Endicott, were those of Pillsbury, Chase, and Troop. These men represent the very vilest forces in New England politics ; they stand for disloyalty to the nation in the past, and for political dishonesty in the present, and they are but types of scores of similar cases. The New York and Philadelphia custom houses

afford additional examples. Throughout the Northern States the new appointees are as a whole most distinctly inferior to the Republicans whose places they take. If, as an apology for the President, it is said that these and countless other appointments have been made under bad advice, we can only answer that it is to be regretted that we have a chief executive the number of whose bad advisers is so inordinately large.

That many of the administration's new supporters continue to speak of it in terms of unqualified, and rather hysterical, praise can only be explained by reference to the curious fashion which has obtained among many of these same men, during the last few years, of viewing with indifference deeds when done by a Democrat which if done by a Republican would have been most savagely attacked—a kind of mental and moral strabismus, well illustrated by the way they criticised the forty-seventh and forty-eighth Congresses respectively. The Republican Congress passed an outrageous river and harbor bill, it is true ; but, in their turn, so did the Democrats. During the life of both Congresses the great questions to be solved were those of Civil Service Reform, relief from over-taxation, and finance. The Republicans met all three, at least partially, passing a vitally important Civil Service law, a small tariff reduction law, and an important banking act. The Democrats, on the contrary, defeated a Civil Service Reform law, declined to give any relief from taxation, and refused to take the action pressingly needed on the silver question. These were the salient points in the careers of the two bodies ; yet the very same persons who went into a condition of mind bordering on intellectual epilepsy at the bare mention of Mr. Keifer's Congress viewed with most unruffled calm the even worse proceedings of the Congress of Mr. Carlisle.

We can readily appreciate, though we may not at all agree with, the attitude of those who at the last election wished primarily to rebuke the Republican Party, even at the cost of a four years' Democratic administration, provided the latter was under so comparatively safe a man as Mr. Cleveland ; but most certainly events have wofully falsified the hopes of those who believed that a change from a Republican to a Democratic administration would be in itself a change for the better. It is both comical and pathetic to compare what the much-glorified "Reform Democracy" has really done, with the expectations concerning it apparently entertained by those well-meaning but somewhat vague persons who, after the



last election, spent a large portion of their presumably valuable time in sounding the variations upon the chorus in Shelley's "Hellas:"

"The world's great age begins anew, the golden years return."

That Mr. Cleveland has done better than most other Democrats would have done, and that he has done as well as his party would let him, is probably true; and his numerous shortcomings and failures simply show that under the most favorable circumstances the Democratic Party, as at present constituted, is not fit to be intrusted with the care of the National Government.

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