

"THE FLORENCE MESSAGE."

Now that the "Florence Message" from Mr. Blaine has been accepted by the bulk of the party as his definitive retirement from the Presidential arena, the process of constructing it in the light of subsequent events, which all Mr. Blaine's utterances have to undergo, has already begun and is progressing rapidly, with very entertaining results. In the first place, most people are much impressed, and his friends are naturally a little dismayed, by the account he gives of the state of things which will be witnessed after his departure. The whole of his letter, barring one short paragraph, is taken up with an account of the bright future which awaits the party after it has lost his services as a candidate. This, of course, makes it appear that those who thought him absolutely necessary to its success made a terrible mistake, and that it could have very well done without him all along.

Another very curious passage in the Message is that in which he asserts that "one thing only is necessary to assure success—complete harmony and cordial coöperation on the part of all Republicans." This has been by no means the understanding of the matter on which the party managers have acted of late years. There is nothing they have more carefully guarded against than "harmony," for whenever the Mugwumps showed any sign of willingness to come back, they have been warned off, and any party candidates they have supported have been sedulously "knifed." The managers have, indeed, ever since 1884, held and preached that "the one thing necessary to assure success" was not "harmony," but Blaine, and that nobody could be a good Republican, no matter how much he liked harmony or coöperation, if he did not like Blaine. This modification of the creed by the Master's hand, naturally, therefore, excites surprise as well as sorrow.

Other views of the letter are varied and interesting. Mr. Depew, while lost in admiration of Mr. Blaine, and liking the Paris Message for its "picturesque peculiarity," maintains that the Florence Message "must be interpreted by the facts and circumstances which have preceded it." As, however, these "facts and circumstances" are only known to a favored few, the work of Blaine hermeneutics must necessarily be confined to a small order of hierophants. We do not suppose there are over one dozen men in the country qualified by training and natural powers to interpret the Master correctly, and of course they are kept very busy. Senator Hawley thinks that though the Message means declination, nevertheless Mr. Blaine may be nominated in spite of it. Mr. Warner Miller was "profoundly stirred" by the Message, and believed the withdrawal to be sincere, but could not be induced to say that it would prevent Mr. Blaine's nomination. Ex-Judge Noah Davis was much moved by it, as "the letter of a patriot and statesman," and thought the Democrats, too, would regret it, because, if they cannot have Cleveland, they must, the ex-Judge thinks, want

Blaine in the Presidency. Mr. Jesse Seligman was "enthusiastic" over it, because it increased his admiration for Blaine, and made him want him for President more than ever, and declared that he was needed in Wall Street to revive business. There was "almost grief" at the Produce and Cotton Exchanges, the *Tribune* says, over the Message, which, we suppose, resembles grief as the mist resembles the rain. Police Commissioner "Steve" French felt quite certain that the Message was sincere, but appeared entirely reconciled to the situation. Commissioner "Johnny" McClave took the same view, was afflicted by the withdrawal, but was certain it was "final." Mr. Edward Mitchell mourned over it too, but saw that it would lead to "unity." Ex-Attorney-General Leslie W. Russell also thought the Message "final," as did Gen. John A. Foster, but hoped "the Convention would override his (Mr. Blaine's) wishes as they did Garfield's," whose nomination, it would appear, was made in spite of his kicks and screams. "Tom" Platt was also profoundly afflicted by the news, but was convinced that Mr. Blaine must now be considered out of the race. The *Tribune* also discovered great disappointment among the temperance people. Albert Griffin of the National Republican Saloon Committee did the "voicing of this sentiment of regret."

We might greatly multiply these citations from the leading Blaine organ. They all go to show that while the sorrow in the party over the Message is deep and universal, it is also for the most part sorrow without hope. Almost everybody who is consulted, after the first burst of grief is over, expresses his firm belief that a man like Blaine could never be induced to change his mind, that he is as much out of the race as if he were dead, and that the party must now go to work with aching heart to fill up the void. It is proper to remark, however, that a Washington correspondent telegraphs "that the subject is not closed, and that the letter is to receive its fuller explanation in some additional statements which will not be made public for some days." We have little doubt this is true. No matter what statement Mr. Blaine makes, an additional statement is sure to come in a few days, but in this case it will not affect the situation. The curtain has fallen, and it is only a very small circle of admirers whom Mr. Blaine made conspicuous, and who will never be conspicuous again, who wish to have it raised again. The lights may be kept burning till the house empties, and the house may empty slowly, but the play is over.

SOUTHERN HOMICIDE.

THE editor of the Knoxville (Tenn.) *Daily Journal*, of whose manful fight for his life at the church door on Sunday we gave some account a fortnight ago, is apparently dissatisfied with our comments on that tragic occurrence, for he has sent us a much-marked copy of his paper containing an answer to our criticisms. What he objects to is in the main the

inferences we drew or appeared to draw from the fight, as to the condition of Southern sentiment on the subject of homicidal encounters and the carrying of concealed weapons. He says we are "disposed to magnify every violation of law in the Southern States and hold it up as an evidence of a general demoralization of Southern society." This is very far indeed from the truth. On the contrary, we have for many years, while commenting on Southern readiness to shed blood about trifles, endeavored to guard against the inference that the homicidal tendency was evidence of "general demoralization." In fact, one of the most surprising things about it, we have always thought and said, was that it existed in the midst of a civilization in other respects so high. For instance, in the present case of the editor of the *Journal*, we should not in this part of the world expect a man who carried a loaded pistol in his pocket on Sunday, and was expert in its use, to go to church at all. But at Knoxville the editor, although he knew that some desperate fellows were on his track, instead of having them arrested and bound over to keep the peace, went armed and ready for them to his place of worship, and was able, by his energy and activity, to kill one and wound another at the door of the sacred edifice, though himself wounded severely. There is an incongruity about this sort of thing which strikes the Northern mind as very odd. One finds it difficult to realize that men who are so constantly armed, so ready to use their weapons in private quarrels and fight for life in the public streets, wear black broadcloth and buy their meat at the butcher's. One rather expects to see them wearing an arsenal in their belts, and a brilliant red jacket and beautiful white petticoats like an Albanian or Montenegrin.

The Knoxville *Journal*, curiously enough, thinks it answers our complaints about Southern customs in this matter of homicide and deadly weapons, by pointing out that there are many crimes committed at the North; that a farmer was recently waylaid, murdered, and robbed in Ohio; that "not long ago a woman was found murdered in New Jersey," and that "only last week a man killed his own mother in the city of Brooklyn with an axe." All this shows a curious inability to comprehend what the Northern charge against the South is. Nobody maintains that ordinary crime, murders, robberies, and the like, are not as common at the North as at the South, and, indeed, much more common. What we charge is, that encounters with deadly weapons between more or less respectable men, in the public streets, are disgracefully frequent at the South, though much less so than a few years ago; that men of good character and standing, instead of appealing to the police, respond with hideous readiness to the invitations of bullies and rowdies to engage in single combat with them in the public highways, and discredit American civilization by butchering each other like Zulus or red Indians.

If the Knoxville *Journal* could give us some examples in this part of the country of furious encounters with knives and pistols

between prominent lawyers, or doctors, or merchants; if it could show that when a litigant assaulted a judge for deciding against him, the judge had to commit suicide to escape the shame of refusing to fight a duel with the blackguard, or to shoot him from behind a fence, as happened two or three years ago in Kentucky; or that a deacon or elder, when he had a falling out with a man, made no scruple of warning him to go armed, in order that he might be attacked on equal terms, as now and then happens at the South; or, in fact, that murder readily occurs to decent men in good social standing at the North as a remedy for trifling social wrongs, then indeed it would have us on the hip.

We admit there has been a great improvement at the South in this matter within the last seven years. A prominent man in South Carolina has lately had the courage to bring a suit for libel, instead of sending a challenge. Similar things have occurred in other parts of the South, and they show great progress. But that there is still considerable room for improvement the Knoxville editor's way of meeting his assailants shows, as does also an article which, curiously enough, he prints in his paper immediately before the one in which he answers us. This article comments on "the shooting of Editor Ellis of the Birmingham *Hornet* last Saturday," and it endeavors to show that Editor Ellis had but little to complain of, because he "abused everybody who crossed his path. His strong point was vituperation, and whoever incurred the displeasure of the editor was made the object upon which filth was emptied by wholesale." Now, we have many such editors in these parts, but nobody thinks of murdering them. Doubtless some of them richly deserve to die, but members of a civilized community, if rightly constituted, refuse to inflict capital punishment on any man, in their own quarrel, without a proper trial by a legal tribunal. One of the inconveniences to which a man has to submit when he becomes a member of such a community, in return for countless benefits, is daily contact with many people who, he is satisfied, are not fit to live. But any one who cannot put up with this inconvenience is really a savage, no matter what kind of clothes he wears.

FROUDE AND MARX.

MR. FROUDE'S book on the West Indies, which we reviewed last week, and which is really a political pamphlet embellished with picturesque descriptions of travel, brings out very strikingly the close agreement of the Socialist and Carlylese philosophers on one point. Mr. Froude, and all his school of political thinkers, are disgusted with representative governments and deliberative assemblies. They would abolish them everywhere, except possibly in England. The orators by whom these assemblies are swayed they consider little short of a nuisance. They would have all races, beginning with the blacks, ruled by able administrators, regulating everything out of their own head, and, if possible, feeling more or less pity and contempt for those over whom they reign. The

possible exceptions to this rule are Englishmen and Americans, though about the Americans we are not so sure. But all other men are summoned, with more or less energy, to provide themselves with masters, if they wish to escape both temporal ruin and eternal damnation. They must give up jabbering and consulting, and learn to obey. They must throw their orators into the sea, and put good admirals and generals in their places. What is wanted in the West Indies, for instance, is not parliamentary institutions, but a batch of austere and determined governors who would "make the niggers mind," or "stand round," as an old Southern overseer would say. The Irish in these matters are much in the same boat as the blacks. If they knew what was good for them, they would be clamoring now, not for home rule, but for a peculiarly stern viceroy who would govern them in the Anglo-Indian fashion. The governors, of course, would see that they were industrious, that they did not talk too much, that they did not waste their money, and that they took as nearly an English view of life as they were capable of.

The Socialists would organize society in very nearly the same way. We do not believe they are as hostile to talk as Mr. Froude, and they care much less than he does about political arrangements. But they agree with him thoroughly as to the unfitness of most men to manage their own business. They are even more opposed to home rule than he is, for they would not let anybody rule his own home. They would, if they could, provide administrators who would take charge of all the "instruments of production"—that is, the land, mines, houses, machinery, and railroads—and then tell us all what kind of business to engage in, in what manner we should carry it on, where and how the product should be sold or disposed of, and how the money or other consideration received for it, should be spent. In fact, we think it would on the whole be worse to be a "nigger" or an Irishman under Karl Marx than under Mr. Froude. There would be even more government, and the governors would not be nearly such gentlemanly men as Mr. Froude's.

It will be seen from all this that, widely as the two schools differ in the view they take of human society, they agree in making tremendous demands on the exceedingly small stock of administrative talent with which Providence has thought fit to endow the human race. If Mr. Froude had his way, and, after getting rid of the parliaments and the talkers, were to undertake to equip every community with a really competent ruler, it is not too much to say that he would need in the British Empire alone fully 1,000 men of the first order of ability. They would all, too, in order to avoid the danger of frequent changes, have to be in perfect physical condition, and very careful about their diet and clothing, and very pure in heart. In fact, Washington after Yorktown, or the Duke of Wellington after Waterloo, is about the sort of man who would pass a Carlylese examining board for a gubernatorial place. On the question how these govern-

ors are to be found Mr. Froude is silent, from which we must infer that the process is an easy one, and that the scarcity of Washingtons and Wellingtons in the early part of the century was due simply to inadequate search. With our present advertising facilities, they would doubtless be forthcoming in great numbers. We should only have to put a "want" into the *Herald* or the *World*, and they would appear in swarms with best recommendations from their last places, and no objections to the country.

One is puzzled in the same way in reading Karl Marx. A child can see that after the capitalists were all hanged or banished, and the instruments of production seized upon, the "job" would still have to be "bossed" by somebody. In fact, we should then need fully as many bosses as there are now capitalists, and, as the stimulus of private interest would be wanting, they would have all to be men of the highest capacity and character—that is, they must be in administrative talent equal to our best railroad presidents, in morals to the best of our bishops and other clergymen, and in sympathy and tender-heartedness to the best mothers of large families in the country. To get an adequate idea of the kind of work that would devolve on them, one must imagine one's self bound on getting up every morning to see that the inhabitants of one large New York block attended diligently to their business during the day, gave every man his due, were properly provided with food, clothing, theatre and car-tickets, that their milk was pure, and that their water ran on the upper stories, and the plumbing was in good order.

Neither Marx nor any other Socialistic writer, any more than Mr. Froude, gives us the slightest hint where this kind of talent can be found in the needful quantity. We presume that they, too, would rely on advertising among the "wants" in a morning paper. That the responses would be numerous is of course certain; but how would the selection be made, and who would watch the inspectors after they had taken office, to see that they got up in time in the morning, kept their accounts properly, and had no private stores of dainties and no favorites among the workers?

We must do Marx and his fellows the justice to say that they do not hint that they themselves would be good men for the place. With Mr. Froude, on the other hand, there is no such modesty. No reader can lay down his book without feeling that he knows at least one man who could promptly pacify Ireland or regenerate the West Indies, and who could, if called on in time, even save the British Empire from Gladstone and the orators.

COERCION IN JAPAN.

JAPAN has not yet exhausted her resources of surprise. At the end of 1885 she crowned the series of revolutions begun in 1868 by apparently eliminating the Asiatic features of her Government. The triple premiership common to China, Corea, and Nippon was abolished; several courses of official inter-