

THE EFFECT OF THE MESSAGE.

THE boldness and novelty of the President's message naturally created more or less uncertainty, both as to its effects on public opinion and on his own political fortunes. It was expected that it would be long, but it turned out to be almost unprecedentedly short. It was expected to deal lightly with a great number of topics, but it dealt with only one, and this thoroughly. It was expected that it would avoid all burning questions, so as not to imperil his renomination, which seemed to be assured by the New York election, but it took up the most burning question of the day, and treated it with utter disregard of its possible effects on the canvass of 1888. It is not surprising that a performance of this sort should have puzzled a great many people, and especially the veterans of political management, to whom it seemed simple foolishness, the spoiling of a magnificent situation. Their sensations were very like honest old Wurmser's in Italy when he was assailed by the young Napoleon in a manner which violated all the rules of the art as taught down to that day. Wurmser had a long line, manned by three excellent divisions, and he expected Napoleon to attack him along the whole line with three divisions also. Instead of this, Napoleon took his three divisions all together, and with them attacked Wurmser's, not all together, but one by one, which Wurmser considered both unfair and reprehensible, but it entirely answered Napoleon's purpose.

All Presidential messages which have been sent to Congress since the war have fallen perfectly flat, except this last one, and yet they were all composed according to usage, both as regards matter and manner. They were of great length and touched on everything, but threw no new light on anything, and were forgotten almost as soon as read. To President Cleveland belongs the honor of having for the first time since Lincoln produced a message which is, in the highest and best sense of the term, a state paper—that is, a paper which sets people thinking, which affects opinion, and which extracts from the mass of issues the really vital and pressing question of the day, the only one which can be neither ignored, nor postponed, nor made light of.

It has now been six weeks before the country, and we have ample means of determining what its effects have been. The first and most plainly observable of these effects is that it has raised the President's character in the estimation of both friends and foes. Those who most severely condemned the message from the party point of view acknowledge that it shows courage and disinterestedness. In other words, in writing it the President has given the strongest evidence he could possibly give, that he is a man of sincere convictions, and that he would rather be right than be President. Other men before him have said this, but he is the only man who has demonstrated it even in the eyes of his enemies or detractors. In other words, every one who calls him a fool on account of it pays the highest possible

tribute to his character. In no way could he so well dispose of the conclusions about him, drawn of late from his apparent lapses from virtue in the matter of civil-service reform, as by unnecessarily putting in peril his chances of renomination, and this is what some of the shrewd politicians thought a month ago that he had done.

We for our part have all along felt assured that his folly in this matter was really the highest wisdom—not the wisdom which comes from calculation, but from sudden inspiration. For courage is, after all, the quality which most readily touches the popular imagination in men put in high places by the popular vote. People pardon a great deal of planning and contriving and giving and taking in a man who is striving for the Presidency; but when he is in the office, the proof of fitness they most appreciate is readiness to put his foot down, to say the right thing at the right time, or even the right thing at the wrong time, without regard to consequences. If the history of the American Presidency teaches anything clearly, it is that the way of the wavering, vacillating, timid man is even harder than that of the bold sinner.

But this is by no means all. The message has also had the extraordinary fortune of receiving an amount of commendation and acceptance from men of the opposite political party, which has fallen to the lot of no similar document since Lincoln appealed to Americans of every party to save the Union. We could easily give the most abundant proofs of this culled from Republican newspapers in all parts of the country. We presume there is not one of our readers who cannot produce similar testimony from his own experience. Tens of thousands of those who did not vote for Cleveland in 1884, and have never since been quite willing to avow that they had made a mistake, have been convinced by the message that he is the man for the times.

Not less significant is the gradual cessation of even the very feeble murmurs which at first came from the Protectionist portion of the Democratic press. Day by day their protests have been becoming feebler, and the arguments in favor of the maintenance of a surplus for politicians to "handle," more and more absurd. There is now an almost general agreement that a surplus must not form a permanent feature of American finance, and the most spiteful enemies of the President find no refuge except in the statement that "if the surplus has to be abolished, it sha'n't be done in Cleveland's way." We do not believe, however, that any rejection of his suggestions as to means will sensibly diminish the impression produced by the manner in which he has called attention to the end. No matter how the evil is cured, he will get the credit of having laid it bare in such a way that every man, woman, and child in the country could see and understand it and measure it. He has, in other words, no matter how the taxes may now be reduced, taught the nation, with a master hand, a lesson in finance which will be constantly recalled in the

efforts to keep down the public burdens that will henceforth have to be made every year until we get down to the bed-rock of all politics—that people should pay into the public Treasury only the sums necessary to "establish justice, insure domestic tranquillity, provide for the common defence, and promote the general welfare."

THE INTERNATIONAL COPYRIGHT BILL.

THE bill which has been presented to the Senate by Mr. Chace, but which it is an open secret was drawn up by a well-known Philadelphia publisher, may be briefly described to be a bill amending that portion of the Revised Statutes of the United States which acknowledges an author's or artist's equitable claim to the fruits of his mental labor, and grants a certain legal protection therefor—in such wise that this protection is secured not only to authors or artists who are citizens of the United States, but to mental workers the world over. The United States has been, for many years, perhaps the only civilized country which has failed to recognize the claims of the author to a reward for his labor without regard to his individual nationality. To our eternal national disgrace, it must be frankly admitted that this delay in granting an act of simple justice has been entirely due to the fact that honest legislation would affect the purses of American citizens. And the tardy measure of justice which our Congress is now called upon to consider is impaired by two regrettable limitations of the very right which it is the purport of the proposed act to establish and grant. It is admitted that when legislatures accord legal protection to what has been acknowledged as the moral right of any class, they may limit the exercise of such right, by virtue of considerations affecting the general good of the whole people. And all States, with a single noticeable exception, have abridged the property rights of authors, by according legal protection to such rights for a limited period of time. In no case, however, is legislation justified which attempts to restrain the exercise of the universally admitted right of any one class for the benefit of any other class, but only when such limitation is beneficial to the whole people.

According to Senate bill 554, the rights secured to the American author by the Domestic Copyright Law are abridged when the law is extended to include the foreign author—firstly, by refusing to permit the latter to manufacture his book wherever he pleases; and, secondly, by further refusing to permit him to supply whatever demand there may be in this country for copies of his authorized foreign edition. Stipulations of this nature have never hampered the international copyright legislation of European States. As contributors to the American press, with a regrettable lack of ingenuousness, have striven to give the impression that the American author is obliged by law to print and publish his work in the United States, it may be briefly but emphatically stated that the Copyright Law of the United States in no wise prevents an author who is a

citizen of this country from printing his book abroad, binding it abroad, or writing it abroad—anywhere in the wide world that he may choose; and not once but many times has this occurred, notable examples being the later novels of Mr. Henry James and Mr. Marion Crawford.

The instigators of these curtailments of the foreign author's rights defend the first upon the ground that compulsory printing in this country is necessary to secure books of sufficient cheapness to be beneficial, by their great circulation, to the people at large; and that the good secured to the masses through cheap books justifies the limitation put upon the right of the comparatively few authors. But the honesty of this defence may be doubted so long as the second prohibition remains, because even the dullest intellect can perceive that if, as is claimed, compulsory printing in this country is necessary in order to prevent English publishers from forcing upon American readers high-priced English editions, a prohibition of import can only be added because of a fear that the English copyright owner may choose to send into this country an authorized edition which could be sold to American readers at a smaller price than the enforced American reprint. But is not a book printed in England at a lower price of equal benefit "to the masses" with the same book printed in this country at a higher price?

We have before insisted that there is no precedent in the foreign copyright laws for such prohibition of importation as is contemplated in this bill. But to return to this point again, it may be well to indicate briefly just what is stipulated in the copyright legislation of countries which present a problem similar to our own, by reason of both countries having one language. We could hardly desire a more suitable instance than that of France and Belgium. The latest copyright treaty between these countries went into effect May 16, 1882. This convention consists of seventeen articles, of which two relate to the importation into either of the countries of copies of works upon which there is copyright in one or the other of them. Section 9 prohibits the importation, exportation, circulation, or sale in each of the two countries of *unauthorized* reproductions, whether such unauthorized reprints proceed from either of the two countries or from any foreign country. This stipulation naturally occurs in all copyright treaties as well as in all domestic copyright laws. The American author by our own law enjoys the protection of a similar prohibition of unauthorized reprints, whether the latter are made and sold in the United States or are printed in Canada or elsewhere and imported into our territory. In section 3 it is further stipulated that the Belgian and French Governments shall take the necessary measures to prohibit the entry into their respective territories of works which the Belgian or French publishers may have acquired the right to reprint, with the reservation that such republications shall not be authorized to be sold in the country of their origin. For example, a French author sells to a Brussels publisher the right to print an edition of his book for Belgium, but with the stipulation

that this edition shall not be sent into France to compete with the original French issue. The second paragraph of the article requires that each copy of such Belgian edition must bear upon its title-page and cover the words: "Edition prohibited in France, but authorized for Belgium and abroad." In like manner, if there should be a copyright treaty between England and the United States, we should naturally expect that it would be stipulated that the American reprint, for example, of Matthew Arnold's poems should not be allowed to be imported into England to compete there with the English copyright edition; and in the same way the American publisher of Henry James's novels would need to be protected against the possible flooding of this market with the cheaper English edition, copyrighted there under treaty arrangements. There is nothing in this convention between France and Belgium to hinder in any way the competing sale in either of the two countries of the edition of a work first published by authority of the author in any one of them. Nor does the Belgian copyright law of March 22, 1886, contain any enactment whatever which circumscribes the distribution of a foreign author's original edition.

The position of Canada towards England, as regards the question of protecting the English author in the former country, presents a parallel to the problem which Senate bill 554 attempts to solve. But although the Canadian Copyright Law, which was revised and consolidated in 1886, is intended to encourage the republishing in that country of the works of English authors, and grants a Canadian copyright upon all books so reprinted, care is taken in section 6 of the above act to explain that "nothing in this act shall be held to prohibit the importation from the United Kingdom of copies of any such work lawfully printed there."

THE SUGAR-BOUNTY CONFERENCE.

THE system of granting bounties upon exports at the same time that duties are imposed upon imports is one that appeals with irresistible logic to the protectionist intellect. There is something so beautifully symmetrical about it. The duty upon imports pays Paul by taxing Peter and the other ten. The bounty upon exports "evens things up" by taxing Paul and the other ten in order to pay Peter. The duty upon imports makes the balance of trade in a nation's favor by reducing importations. The bounty upon exports doubles this balance by increasing exportations. The duty gives employment to labor by shutting out foreign products; the bounty accomplishes the same great end by sending out native products. The duty raises the price of one class of products, the bounty raises the price of another; and the two classes of industries thus stimulated furnish a home market, which supports the remainder of the country in ease and affluence. In short, the two systems working together attain the high ideal of shutting out all possible goods, sending out all possible goods, and keeping what remains at the highest possible price.

Yet, in spite of these obvious advantages, the European Conference just held on the question of the sugar bounties has ended in a unanimous condemnation of the system. Every one of the sugar-producing nations was represented—Germany, Austria, France, Sweden, Denmark, Holland, Belgium, Spain, and Italy. With the exception of little Belgium, all agreed upon the plan of manufacturing sugar in bond, in order to prevent the possibility that rebates to exporters should serve as a cloak for further bounties. As Belgium is as anxious as the rest to be rid of the bounty system, she will probably, says the London *Spectator*, accept the method approved by the rest. There seems to be little doubt that all the legislatures will ratify the agreement of their representatives, and thus suddenly bring to an end a system which has been steadily growing for almost a century.

Ever since the Napoleonic wars the beet-root sugar industries have had every possible favor shown them by all the fiscal bureaus of Continental Europe. It was during the Napoleonic wars that these industries took their start. For a number of years the wars themselves furnished the necessary protection, but when peace finally brought with it the ever-attending calamity of low prices, the people were kept from suffering the injurious effects by the imposition of heavy duties. Inasmuch as the land on which the beet-root was grown, and many of the factories at which it was refined, were owned by the country gentlemen who everywhere controlled the legislatures, the new industry had no difficulty in obtaining the protection it desired.

But by and by the protective duties were insufficient to satisfy the demands of the sugar interest, and Government aid was asked that foreign markets might be invaded. At first this demand was made modestly. The interest consented to have taxes imposed upon the beet-root—so much per ton—and asked that a compensating rebate should be given them on the sugar exported. Of course nothing could be fairer. The request was at once granted, and the same thing happened as occurred in our own country when, during the civil war, the internal-revenue taxes were first levied. The question arose, How large a rebate is necessary to compensate for the new taxes on the raw materials? To determine this required expert testimony, and only those who were interested in the case were deemed competent to act as jurors to decide it. Practical sugar men were left to settle the question. The governments, of course, maintained their time-honored reputation for generosity, and refrained from haggling over the terms proposed.

But soon a new complication arose. The sugar men of one nation began to plead that their competitors in some other nation were more highly favored than themselves. This led to competitive generosity on the part of the governments. Meanwhile, the process of manufacturing had undergone great changes. It became possible to extract double as much sugar as formerly from the same quantity of beet-root. The rebates were not lowered, and all these influences act-