REJECTED STONE;

OR,

INSURRECTION vs. RESURRECTION

IN

AMERICA.

BY A NATIVE OF VIRGINIA.


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XI.

A FOREIGN POWER.

The promptness with which the Secretary of State has expressed the position of our Government on our transatlantic relations has elicited the warmest commendations of the people. It has been distinctly announced, that in this contest we will submit to no interference and accept no help from foreign powers.

Especially none from the Powers Above!

Toward the last foreign Powers the cold shoulder has been turned in a way to rejoice the hearts of the "New-York Herald" and the "Boston Courier," and many others, who have long insisted on the strict application of the Monroe doctrine to the government of God, whose aims at encroachment on this continent they have watched with such a jealous eye.

Yet it is less than doubtful if we can conquer without them, or irrespective of an alliance with them.

Except as the two are symbols of other facts, we suppose that humanity at large is entirely indifferent whether the individual residing in the White House for the next four years is named J. Davis or A. Lincoln. If these two represent inferior and superior principles, — so that, as one or the other rules there, the shadow moves forward or backward, marking progression or retrogression on the dial of civilization, — then the
world is pledged to the superior. But suppose that to England, for instance, there are presented simply two jarring political—purely political—interests, in the names of the two Presidents; one representing the integrity of the boundary-line of a rival nation, the other the independence of a nation not her rival, and on which she is dependent for cotton. The government, obeying its first instinct, self-preservation, as our own does, stands perfectly justified in taking sides with that party in which her interest is most involved. England has herself set up the standard of emancipation, and to that her people would hold her; but where that principle is not only not involved, but distinctly disclaimed, the people will leave the government to the normal influences of the cotton-mill. They do perfectly right. The antislavery men of Europe have little reason to choose between governments supported by Caleb Cushing, B. F. Butler, and the "New-York Herald," on the one hand, and Yancey, Rhett, and Jeff. Davis, on the other. It is brought before Europe as a purely political question; and we cannot, without a contemptible conceit, expect any element to determine the attitude of Europe toward it higher than policy. Is not popular government involved? Assuredly: but Europe has decided already that popular government is not good; equally it has decided that cotton is good.

Now let us trace this same principle as it decides our relation to the transmundane Power.
THE REJECTED STONE.

Our Congress requested the President to appoint a day of humiliation, fasting, and prayer; and he did so: which shows that we have rather more disposition to conciliate this than any other foreign power. This was doubtless due to a late defeat. One is reminded of the psalm our fathers sang:—

"Jeshurun he waxed fat,
And down his cheeks they hung:
He kicked against the Lord his God,
And high his heels he flung."

Jeshurun was reduced. We also have been reduced, certainly in a military, and we trust in a moral sense. When any fruits of this repentance are brought forth, we shall be glad to record the indications. Thus far, we stand fighting for as purely a selfish end as the rebels of the South.

No doubt there are thousands of men North, and with our army in the South, who plead and fight for justice and freedom, not only for the electors of Mr. Lincoln, but also for men of every color. These maintain the Government, because they hope, that, in its contest with the slaveholder, the slave will be freed. But should the star-spangled banner ever float on the shores of the Gulf, and still over African slaves, the hearts of thousands would once again freeze toward this nation, and the flag of Disunion float in the North, with thousands around it where hundreds were before.

Our President and his Premier have given us our
watchword: they have told us, that between Slavery and Freedom there is an "irrepressible conflict." If the Union with Slavery in it is regained, all will know that it is but the lull of the volcano.

Thomas Jefferson once said, that, if the South were ever to witness an insurrection of slaves, there was no attribute of God which could take the side of the oppressor in that contest. The leading commanders of this war against an insurrection initiated their entrance into the regions of Slavery by a promise of crushing out with an iron hand the insurrection of slaves: in other words, should these Negroes take side with our men in a struggle of life and death, they would be shot down for helping us! Nearly every general proclaims that no fugitive shall enter his lines. Our President, in the midst of a slaveholders' insurrection, and on the blessed Fourth of July itself, sends a message to Congress, in which Slavery is not remotely alluded to.

Not long ago, a distinguished friend of the Republic of Haiti, in company with a very able and learned Senator, entered the office of a very wise and diplomatic Secretary of one of the departments of this Government: whereupon a scene like this occurred:—

Senator. Mr. Secretary, permit me to introduce you to Mr. A. B., a friend of the Haitian Government, and authorized to represent the same to a certain extent.

Secretary. How do you do, Mr. A. B.?

A. B. Quite well, I thank you.
Senator. The Haitian Government now naturally hopes that the success of Republicanism secures the recognition of her republic.

A. B. She is ready to send her minister at any time.

Secretary (twisting uneasily in his seat). Really, gentlemen, this is a very grave and difficult question; and I have not leisure to consider it.

Senator. A difficult question? 'Tis but a scratch of your pen.

Secretary (twisting three times in his seat). But, sir,—really, sir,—I—I—

A. B. Oh! do not let us press it, if the Government is averse to it.

Secretary. The fact is, gentlemen, Washington cannot receive a black minister.

(Exeunt Senator and A. B. with "Good-mornings.")

The Republican Administration had answered Republican Haiti in the very words of Henry A. Wise, when, a nation freed by her own right arm, she vainly appealed to America for recognition, as America had a few years before, and under the same circumstances, appealed to other nations.

The intrenchments about Washington may be very complete; but mark this: Washington is not safe until a black minister can be received there!

Now, whilst we are speculating as to the possibility of our blockade being raised by France and England, would it not be well for us to see if we have not
weakened our cause and our force by completely disowning the only moral element in this conflict?

We have made, or are in danger of making, four millions of disappointed enemies in the South, whom we might have counted on as our friends in any emergency. Freedom is first with the black, as with every man: next to that, the evil he knows, against that he knows not. Every Negro returned to his master—to be made an example of what treacherous Negroes may expect in these times—has sown amongst his comrades the seeds of hate and revenge against our army.

We have disheartened many of our noblest and best young men, by degrading, with a taint of man-hunting and oppression, the banner and the cause.

We have paralyzed the pulses of the lovers of equality and liberty all over the world, which were ready to beat toward us with a steady tide of sympathy and encouragement. How could Victor Hugo or Garibaldi extend his hands to a general, who, with the very weapon with which he is defending his own liberty, is ready to crush others who would seek theirs?

We have lost the battle of Manassas, and with it the prestige of a first victory and the order of an army, chiefly because General McDowell’s colorphobia must cut off the Negro’s hope, and with it his own only source of information. It was a crime and a blunder.

In refusing to recognize Haiti, we have shrouded the
one light that might now be shining over the darkest problem of this war.

Would it not be a curious case of poetic justice, if, in a year from now, we should witness a "situation" somewhat like the following? —

1. The United States calling on the slaves of the South, to whose bondage she has so long been a party, whose possible freedom by confiscation she reluctantly approved, to save her entire people from subjugation.

2. The United States begging Haiti to help her sustain and shield millions of manumitted women and children, and invoking a black minister at Washington.

The army of the United States is, without doubt, fighting for the liberty of the slave; but so also is the army of the Confederate States. Both are, by compulsion, hastening the day of freedom (but that is scarcely more our object than it is theirs). Indeed, the Southern army has done more of this indirect service to humanity than our own. With both it has been involuntary. There is a Power behind both thrones at work. Freedom sits above, in calmness and light; and we know her star cannot recede below the horizon: but whether she is to be advanced the next step by a dreadful retribution to the recreant North, or by the conquest of the South, is, alas! yet doubtful. Again and again have strong governments, not built upon the head corner-
stone of Justice, been buried under the splendor of their own ruins, that humanity at large might have another monument to say, "Remember!"

Were our cause sanctified by any universal principle, the arm of God, whose sinews are the true hearts of the whole world, would be folded about us. "But," it is replied, "we are fighting for the principle of free suffrage: it is bullets arraigning ballots." Yet scarcely can free suffrage be called a principle. It is an institution yet on trial in the world: it has yet to make its cause good at the tribunal of Reason. Freedom of the ballot is not necessarily good in itself: if it result in perpetuating injustice or in anarchy, it proves itself a wrong principle. New-York City has had to ask the State Legislature to select her municipal officers. England may well point to her superior freedom under limited suffrage. Her members of Parliament are not assassinated; her Queen does not have to pass from Scotland to London in disguise; there is no county of her kingdom where her most radical orator is debarred an entrance on penalty of tar and feathers. All these evils have for years co-existed with our popular suffrage; and our Republican Administration would hardly have molested one of them, had the South not precipitated this Rebellion.

Therefore we still maintain, that, as far as our Government is concerned,—that is, saving a reserved purpose among the unofficial masses whose power is yet to be measured,—we have no aim in this con-
flict that makes our cause the cause of Destiny, or our success any necessary step in the progression of the world.

XII.

M A N A S S E S.

It is said that one of our army chaplains had prepared a discourse on the text, "Manasseh is mine." It was never preached. At daybreak his regiment was marching forward, with the hope of preaching the same text from the cannon's mouth. But the text has remained a vision in the Psalms.

Manasses is a symbol. The assault and the courage of it, the repulse and the shame of it, symbolize with unerring accuracy a certain moral status of our nation, consequently of its army, which, by the conditions of the universe, did not deserve Manasses, and did not obtain it. Why were we defeated there? We had poor generals. Why had we poor generals? Why was Patterson enabled by his cowardice or treachery to make our disaster sure, after McDowell, by blunderingly marching in the dark, had made it probable? Both of these men were known as life-long cringers to the men they were sent to fight. If John Brown had been with a United-States army at Harper's Ferry, would he have