

THE PRESIDENT AND THE INDIANS.

While party hacks are at war over President Cleveland's rhetorical ability and general statesmanship—one side holding him to be the veriest of dullards and the other that he is a Macaulay and a Beaconsfield in one—it is the province of those who prefer to judge of men, their works and words in the light of standard criteria, uninfluenced by partisanship or bigotry to establish just conclusions. The inaugural address was not a casket of rhetorical gems and was evidently not intended to be; neither was it a string of mildewed platitudes. It was remarkable more for its freedom from glittering generalities and its directness in dealing with every subject discussed than anything else, and thus looked at it was a good document—honest, unambiguous and straightforward. There was a great deal that the President did not say—necessarily so in an address of less than 2000 words—but what he did say was plain, candid and to the point.

It seemed to us that the reference to the Indian question was more nearly expressive of the President's personal characteristics than anything else in the address. It was not verbose and much of it was not new; but it was just, honest and unpretentious. We have reached a point at which the "wards of the nation" not only claim but imperatively demand our serious, patriotic and humane consideration; they do not do this of themselves, for they are measurably unconscious of their true situation—the logic of the case does not appeal to them as a class, probably would not if there were but a few dozens instead of a few thousands of them left. They are going very fast, and the fact that they are so nearly oblivious to their condition does but make it all the more pathetic. Out of powerful bands who once owned everything in eight and roamed wheresoever they would without let or hindrance, remain a few straggling handfuls, who are graciously permitted to occupy limited areas of their own soil, and so long as they do not transgress by going beyond the lines, those who despoiled them of all will supply them with a few of the necessities of life after the same shall have passed through the white agent's sieve!

An exchange, scouting the idea of dealing with the red men by means of "treaties" which none of them understand, says this method originated at a time when the power of the two races on this continent was more evenly balanced than it now is. It sounded better, our cotemporary thinks, when the encroaching white desired a slice of the aborigines' domain, to say that we acquired it by treaty than to just confess simply that we took it. And as we began so we have continued.

The fruits of this original and continued dishonesty are shown to be many and bitter. We have not found honor by it in the eyes of the other nations of the world, nor self-respect in our own. Not one right or possession of the Indian has been held more sacred by us for the reason that it was protected by a "treaty." If we wanted a thing, we had it. Instead of passing an act through both houses

of Congress declaring our will accomplished, we "appointed a commission to negotiate a treaty," with the interested tribe. Sometimes there were a few Indians thereafter possessed of unusually abundant stores of the things dear to the red man's heart, sometimes there was a curious outbreak of intemperance among them, sometimes there was doubt thrown upon the signatures. But in the end the treaty was always ratified; and those Indians that did not like it could go out on the prairie and kick, or spread their discontent and treat us to a new Indian war.

The few words uttered by the President on this subject go to show that he understands it very much as it is herein set out; and this, with the concomitant fact that he has such elements as stalwart truthfulness and old-fashioned honesty in his composition are auguries of improved methods in dealing with the lingering remnants of the aborigines. Whether it shall be determined to imperil their physical well-being by a general system of mental education or permit them to go back to the happy hunting grounds with their minds as free from impressions wrought by schools as when they left it, and the remainder of their lives passed in unopposed accordance with their traditions, let them be made to understand one thing—that what they have is theirs incontestably. Let them know that their last hours are to be passed upon their own soil unpursued and unhampered by the covetous white man. Let Oklahoma boomers and others of that class understand that hereafter they must choose homes from the ample domain not occupied by the original and continuous proprietors. We believe President Cleveland intends to see that this is done, for in effect "he himself hath said it."

OUR EX-PRESIDENTS

It may be of interest to be reminded of the coincidences in the post-official career of the Presidents of the United States. The following information is furnished by a Washington correspondent: Six of the Presidents—Washington, Jefferson, Madison, Jackson, Johnson and Hayes—became planters or farmers upon retiring from public life; five—Van Buren, Fillmore, Tyler, Grant and Cleveland—openly tried to get another term; five—Van Buren, Polk, Fillmore, Pierce and Grant—traveled extensively at the close of their official career; and four—Adams, Pierce, Buchanan and Hayes—sooner or later became, after a fashion, recluses. Ex-President Harrison it is now generally understood has accepted the flattering invitation to become a college professor made by Senator Stanford, and will deliver a course of law lectures in the Stanford University, California.

HOUSE, NOT GOSPEL, FREE.

The problem that comes very near being uppermost just now in religious circles in the East is whether the church shall be free or not. The champions on the negative side of the

question tell us that if the church were made free too many of the people who enjoy its privileges forget to contribute as they ought for its support, such people taking it for granted that because no pews or sittings are owned or rented the institution has no need of support from contributions but is independent of public aid through certain resources of which the public is not informed. By way of enforcing their argument the opponents of the free church call attention to Dr. Talmage's great tabernacle which is staggering under a huge burden of indebtedness, and the future of which, in consequence, is in so much uncertainty; one of the lady members of the congregation said the other day that "not more than five percent of those who throng to hear Dr. Talmage preach put any money into the basket."

It is not contended that there are very many of the free churches which have so sad a story to tell as has the Brooklyn tabernacle; and the advocate of the free church system point out that under better management and closer economy Dr. Talmage would be in a more hopeful condition. They insist that though there is much discouragement in the way, "the real problem is how to make the average person realize his full duty in the matter," the question of the church being free having already been decisively answered in the affirmative by the great majority of those concerned. In other words they claim that the point now is, how to impress upon the devotee that the church itself is free but the Word of Life is not free.

For our part, we confess that if the passing of the plate and the basket does not sufficiently remind the worshipper of the fact, there is going to be some difficulty in hitting upon a scheme that will.

THE PRICE OF WHEAT.

The spectacle of a great nation complaining because of the bulkiness of its breadstuff supply is only equaled by that of other one that the same nation is in possession of lamentations deep and dire because of having such a generous share of one of the precious metals of the world! The questions of how to dispose of the former and how to curtail the value and circulation of the latter have worried our statesmen, financiers and political economists not a little, and the more they haggle with the situation the less progress they seem to make. In some parts of the Northwest they have resorted to the practical solution of burning their corn for fuel; just think of this and then think of human beings in different parts of the earth actually starving! If the efforts of wheat-jobbers and silver-jugglers are a reproach to Providence, what can the destruction of that which has the quality of appeasing hunger and saving life itself be called?

The Chicago Herald of a recent date contains the following paragraph:

The government report March 10 is expected to disclose to the world authoritatively the reason for the present astonishing wheat accumulations in America; that the astonishingly large visible supply is really offset by an astonishingly small farm reserve, almost 100,000,000 less