

and that each was necessary in order to act as a counterpoise against the other. The next liberal hand with the veto was Andrew Johnson, but the results in his case were exactly the opposite of Governor Wells, for all of them were overruled. Indeed, it used to be said by the humorists when a new bill was passed by both houses of Congress that it then lay "awaited the President's veto to become law." His vetoing propensity was a natural result of the ground he took in relation to the reconstruction of the South, being diametrically opposite to that of Congress. This led up to but was not the immediate cause of his impeachment in 1867. President Grant used the veto several times, but President Cleveland heads the list in this respect.

As long as the law-builders perform imperfect work, it is a good thing that the veto power exists and is in the hands of a man who knows how and when to use it. Let not the frequency of the occurrence deter the executive from making it as much more frequent as the occasion may require. In bad hands the veto is a kicking gun, sure to hurt the person who holds it, whatever it may accomplish in the other direction; properly wielded it is an engine of protection to the one using it as well as to those for whom it is used.

#### ENGLAND'S CHANGED POSITION.

According to a dispatch it appears to have dawned at last upon the Russian statesmen that England's move to Africa is a direct attack upon the French-Russian alliance as well as a reply to the entente between the czar's government and the sultan. Worst effect the discovery will have upon the further development on the political chess board is not yet apparent. Russia moves slowly and with deliberation. But it is perfectly clear that the contest on the banks of the Nile practically is between Great Britain on one side and France and Russia on the other.

From an English point of view the control of Egypt, and more particularly of the Suez canal, is a matter of vital importance. Great Britain cannot relinquish her hold upon the administration of that country to a power that at any time might close her nearest road to India. To restore Egypt to Turkey is not safe, because any guarantee the sultan might give would be worth just as much and no more than the promises the Turkish rulers for years so willingly have given Europe. The effort, therefore, on the part of the sultan, backed by Russia and France, to bring up the Egyptian question at this time and force England to declare her further intentions as to that country, can hardly fail to bring about a climax. That England is not going to retire from Egypt to make room for France is certain. And it is almost equally certain that the latter country finally will have to pocket her indignation and give up her ambitious claims of extending her African possessions along the Mediterranean from the Atlantic to the Red Sea.

The expedition to Soudan is officially admitted to be a war of aggression, undertaken for the purpose of

strengthening British hold upon Egypt. The country is a region adjoining Egypt and extending 1,600 miles in length and 700 miles in width. England never has had a title to any part of this country. At the time General Gordon was by the khedive sent out on his tragic expedition, every step was thwarted by the English government on the ground that neither Great Britain nor Egypt had any right to suzerainty over Soudan. He was consequently left to perish notwithstanding the popular clamor for a relief expedition. At that time England's occupation of Egypt was looked upon as a temporary arrangement and the conquest of the country to the south had no apparent justification. The situation is entirely changed now. The effort to establish British rule south of Egypt can be regarded in no other light than a notification to all interested that the occupation of Egypt from a temporary arrangement has assumed a permanent one which must be still more secured by extending the rule to adjacent territory, which otherwise might be taken by rival powers. England's changed position relative to the Nile regions is pretty safe, however, since France alone cannot render active opposition and Russia's interests are not directly involved.

#### CRUCIFIXION IN OUR AGE.

We live in an enlightened age. Sciences are adored and inventions flourish. The light of reason sheds its illuminating rays over mankind. Yet superstition lives too, seeking refuge into the deep shadows that still linger here and there in the deeper recesses, where neither reason nor revelation has as yet assumed control.

A little valley in the Santa Rita mountains, Southern Arizona, will shortly become the scene of a fearful drama. On Good Friday the mysterious order of "Los Hermanos Penitentes," (the Penitent Brothers) will perform their ceremony of the crucifixion by extravagant rites, involving brutal self-torture.

Some years ago similar ceremonies could be seen in every town of southern California and New Mexico, but the advance of civilization has now driven them off to more secluded spots.

An idea of the ceremony may be formed from the following extracts of the description given in the New York World:

The person to be crucified is, in some places, selected by lot, but in Taos he is always a volunteer. It is the wish of every penitente who has been chosen for the crucifixion to be nailed to the beam. In former years no other method was even considered. The chief brother, or "Hermano Mayor," decides this delicate question. If the victim is not nailed he is bound so tightly that the pain must be fully as intense as though his feet and hands had been pierced with the spikes.

When the time for the crucifixion arrives the "Hermano Mayor" produces the volunteer, who is entirely naked, except for the cloth about the loins and the head wrapping. He is led to the spot, where a hole has been dug in the earth to receive the base of the cross.

The victim, or rather the volunteer, walks firmly to the cross and stretches

himself upon it, with his back against the longer beam and his arms outstretched along the cross pieces. "Hermanos de Luz," or Brothers of Light, lash the arms and legs of the penitente to the cross, drawing the thongs so tight that they cut into the flesh and force the blood through the skin. The volunteer never protests or makes a sign of pain. On the contrary, it has frequently happened that he has rebelled at the decision to bind him to the cross, and has insisted that he be nailed.

At a signal from the priest the rope attached to the top of the cross is manœvered and the ponderous beam is slowly raised upright. As it nears the perpendicular it suddenly drops into the hole with a shock that causes the crucified one to wince, despite his fanatic courage.

Earth and loose rocks are thrown into the hole to steady the beam. The weight of the suspended body causes the ropes to sink into the arms and legs. The flesh swells and the skin turns red, then purple, then black.

Meanwhile the other penitentes pray and inflict upon themselves horrible tortures. The priests gather sharp, thorny cacti and weave them into crowns, which they bind about their heads, drawing blood in a dozen places. The older and more fanatical throw their naked bodies into beds of cactus and suffer torments worse than a thousand bee stings. Others tear their feet with jagged stones and broken bits of glass, and beat each other on the back with whips and clubs.

The suffering victim on the cross remains there for nearly half an hour. Finally he loses consciousness, but even then he is not taken down. He must remain crucified until the chief brother gives the signal to take down the cross.

Then, with the motionless form of the crucified one between them, the Brothers of Light return in solemn procession to the morada. If on arrival there the body is found to contain life it is nursed back to health and strength. Frequently the crucifixion ends fatally.

One of the most interesting ceremonies that precede and lead up to the crucifixion takes place during the last days in the Lenten season. A large adobe hut is arranged as a chapel, an altar being made of empty boxes piled up to the shape of a pyramid and covered with plain cotton cloth. Here the people come in great numbers during Holy Week and give themselves up to their devotions, which are continued day and night.

Outside the chapel a scene is being enacted which differs strangely from that within. Here are gathered a number of young men and boys, clad in fantastic garments and wearing hideous masks. The masks are generally made from sheepskin, with the wool on the outside. The holes for the mouth, nose and eyes are burned with hot irons, giving them a stung and diabolical appearance, and each head is ornamented with antlers.

These persons are called "Judases." It is their duty to laugh and scoff at the devotions and to jeer at those who profess to believe. They enter the chapel from time to time, without bowing before the altar, and while inside amuse themselves by pinching and otherwise annoying those at prayer.

At night the Judases build great bonfires and dance and bowl around them from dark until daylight. Their aim is to prove which of them is the most truly devilish, the test being to jump through the flames and to come out unscathed.

The Judases, however, meet with a just reward. On Easter Day, after the resurrection has been celebrated by a firing off of pistols, the Judases are seized, their masks are thrown aside and all their clothing is removed above their waists.