

severely frowned down anywhere. It does not, however, appear that we are now in any danger from that source, notwithstanding the financial plank of the Democratic platform; its endorsement by the people and its authorship alone should, we think, be a sufficient guarantee in the right direction, as was exhaustively shown in a recent issue of the NEWS.

THE FORTHCOMING MESSAGE.

The death of President Harrison's father-in-law was given as a reason for the probable lateness of the annual message a few days ago; now we have the announcement that it will not be detained at all, but will be sent to Congress by Tuesday next at the latest. There is more than usual interest in the forthcoming document, for several reasons, prominent among which is that it is the last of the kind Mr. Harrison will ever prepare, and therefore may partake somewhat of the nature of a valedictory; also that it may exhibit some traces of the contending emotions with which his bosom has been filled of late. However that may be, it will undoubtedly be a patriotic, capable document.

A Washington correspondent, who claims to be in a position to know, says the message will naturally make few recommendations for legislation, but his resume of the condition of public business will be such as to show that the administration, in giving up power, has no regrets. The President will make it clear that the legislation which the people seem to want should come from the party that will soon be in complete power. In discussing the financial conditions he will indirectly answer some of the partisan criticisms that are heard about the condition of the treasury, and is likely to point out wherein the expenditures of the government have grown. He may recommend the suspension of further payment on public works until the public finances justify it; at the same time will probably show how the expenditures are in excess of the revenues, because of the removal of the sugar tax, and leave it to the people to judge whether they want the tax removed. In other words, accepting this correspondent's prefiguring as correct, the President will impliedly if not directly ask that the policy outlined by the Democratic national platform and which the people have just endorsed by 627,000 plurality, be given full force and effect, to the end that if faulty its practical application will develop its faults and thus the remedy can be supplied later; whereas, if not put to the crucial test, the experiment which the people have elected to try will not have been given the opportunity which would be satisfying to them. There should be no fault-finding, it would seem, over such suggestions, being so clearly in line with the requirements and wishes of so great a preponderance of the voters.

The question which we of the Far West are concerned in more, perhaps, than any other, is that of silver. The correspondent advises us on this head that there has been some discussion over the advisability of the President

recommending the repeal of the Sherman silver law, on the ground that it has served its purpose. Such a recommendation, we are advised, would have a good effect on the international monetary conference now in session in Brussels. The silver states have shown by their votes that the Sherman law is not satisfactory to them, and as the rest of the country never demanded it the President, it is claimed, cannot but be in accord by recommending its repeal. It is not absolutely certain that he will do so, yet there are said to be indications that he leans to such a recommendation. It does begin to look, however, as though the conference might forestall the President in this important matter; certainly it seems as if silver were about to advance several points in the scale and remain there, and whether the result shall be accomplished by congressional or international action or by both does not so much matter.

We are informed that the cholera epidemic will be discussed, and Congress will be advised to legislate more specifically, possibly to the establishment of a national quarantine. While power was found for the executive department, the desirability of having this power clearly defined, we are told, points to a national quarantine as the safest way of avoiding conflict with local health officers and of making the quarantine effective for the whole country. Immigration naturally grows out of the cholera discussion, and on this point the advisability of Congress defining the position of this country will probably be shown. President Harrison, it is claimed, will not recommend the total prohibition of immigration for ten years, as some have advised him to do, but he will emphasize the necessity of further restriction than is now imposed.

Having come so near to what the Chief Magistrate intends placing before the Senate and House of Representatives in the way of suggestions and recommendations, there does not seem to be much left to look for except, perhaps, in the way of review; and as to this and all the rest of it for that matter, it might be as well to wait for the document itself. President Harrison has a habit at times of keeping his own counsel and of doing and saying things to suit himself. The NEWS will publish the message entire when it comes.

THAT VEXED QUESTION.

It is astonishing how often questions regarding the manner of choosing the President and Vice President are asked, there being scarcely a newspaper in the land a year old but what has been requested to furnish such information at least once, some of them several times. One cause, perhaps, is the fact that those who essay the task of answering do not always take the trouble of looking up the points concerning which information is desired, and thus the questioner, sooner or later, finds that he is in possession of instruction which does not instruct. The Ogden Standard, of Wednesday, contained a response to a question of the kind spoken of, consisting of an extract from Johnson's epitome of the constitutional and legal

provisions upon the subject, of which the following is a part:

The Constitution ordains that the electors shall meet in their respective states on the first Wednesday in December, and vote by ballot for President and Vice-President, one of whom at least shall not be an inhabitant of the same state with themselves; and they shall make distinct lists of all persons voted for as President, etc., and of the number of votes for each, which lists they shall sign and certify and transmit sealed to the seat of government of the United States, directed to the president of the Senate. The electors of all the states constitute the electoral college. A majority of the whole number of electoral votes is necessary to elect the President and Vice-President. They meet at the capitals of their respective states. The electoral votes are opened and counted on the second Wednesday of February by both houses of Congress, which meet in the chamber of the Representatives. In the actual mode of performing their duty the electors do not exercise any judgment or discretionary power in the choice of President and Vice-President, but cast their votes for the candidates previously nominated by their party, usually in a national convention.

If the *Standard* writer had relied upon his own mind and ability to answer, instead of trusting implicitly to other authority, he would not have been guilty of the blunders which are thus given to a confiding reader in the guise of information. The first statement in the extract is untrue, as the Constitution does nothing of the kind; it mentions no time when the electors shall meet, leaving that to the law-making power, which has provided that the electors shall meet at the time stated. The second sentence states but a small part of the case, in that it fails to show that the certificates are made out in triplicate and does not show by what means they reach the seat of government; one set is sent to the President of the Senate by mail, another set goes to him by a special messenger chosen by the electors, and the third is filed in the United States court for the district in which the election has been held. The statement that the electors meet at the capitals of their respective states is not necessarily correct, the Constitution providing that they meet at such place as the legislature may direct; and the assertion that the electors exercise no judgment or discretionary power but vote for the candidates of their party previously nominated, is misleading at least. The electors are not compelled by any law (except party fealty) to vote for anybody who may be nominated; they are presumed to be utterly unbiassed in their action and in their united judgment to elect such men as are presumably fittest. The fact that they have on nearly every occasion of late years voted for the men previously nominated by the national convention of their party does not show that they are bound to do so by any means; and the implication that they act like so many marionettes, simply registering the will of their party, has a tendency to deprive the exalted station of a presidential elector of its importance and dignity and to make of the solemn act of voting simply the enacting of a role in a not very serious drama. It conveys a wrong impression and is therefore not information at all.