

THE EVENING NEWS.

Wednesday, Jan. 27, 1873.

The Lesson of New Orleans.

The whole country has been deeply stirred by the recent events in New Orleans, and the attention which those events have aroused is a good sign. Whatever temporary injustice may be done in the heat of discussion, we trust the sober sense of the American people to come ultimately to a right decision; and we would fain hope to have it done, and then it may safely be said, that the State government established by an honest vote to take care of itself.

In strongly urging the withdrawal of Federal supervision from the South, we do not desire to be understood as being helpless against Southern or special danger. It would still have its troops available at short notice; and the constitutional provision for a State requisition for help would be sufficient for all emergencies. But we desire no longer to see the Southern people, in the power of local politicians. We desire to see the Southern people, black and white, assured in the most unmistakable manner that it is their business to govern themselves, and that neither Congress nor the President is going to interfere with them in their proper pursuits. We desire to see the United States government removed from its discreditable position—a theoretical guardian of the peace, and at the same time in the power of a factious and dishonest political gamblers. Let republicans remember that they are furnishing a precedent. Suppose a democratic President at Washington; suppose the South and the Northern states, and the two classes of federations, in one way and another, for the settlement of local trouble. In effect, this policy implies that the general government holds itself directly responsible for social order throughout the Southern States. The Christian Union has often pointed out the great disadvantages which this policy involves. The Louisiana difficulty only brings home with new force a principle we have often maintained: that the plan of separation of the South from the federal government should be definitely abandoned, and the Southern communities be left to manage their own affairs, as the Northern communities are.

No general argument could give to this idea any such force as the events of New Orleans have given it. All that can be said in defense of the President's action, and even of Governor Kellogg's action, reacts powerfully against the entire policy of supervision. Granted that the conservatives acted most illegally in seizing the legislative organization; granted that there was a kind of compact between the two, granted that the use of the troops prevented disorder and bloodshed. These are just such contingencies as must often occur in the state of society which exists in many places at the South. There always will be factions and tricks, politicians and heated contests. In common, there will be constant occasions for United States troops if those troops are once to undertake general police duty. We shall be thrown back more and more on the strong arm of the President, more and more will society sink into feverish lassitude, and all healthy political life be destroyed. Then, when we have started on is a easy and willing one. It is so pleasant to have a Providence enshrouded at Washington to regulate the disorders we do not want to grapple with ourselves. When a Tweed controls and plunders the metropolis, how desirable to have a few thousand miles across from the city in the bay, instead of being left to doubtful lawsuits and wearisome election contests! When Pennsylvania politicians carry an election by fraud, how simple to ask the President to set it right. When California wants to withdraw from the control of a Legislature, and trickery leads to brawling, and cunning provokes force, how great a relief to quiet people to telegraph to Washington and presently have a dashing cavalry officer sent to set matters to rights! There is hardly any disease of the body politic for which this simple remedy could not be offered. "Get the general government to attend to it."

We take it that the American people do not mean to choose this way of settling disputes. We believe the idea is quite as firm over in the Anglo-Saxon mind that it is better to manage one's own affairs than to have them managed for him; that the household, the church, the township, the State, ought each to order its own matters, not shirking them on to some other. This is the theory of the "internal," in short, the theory of the "internal," which shall relieve its subjects of the trouble of taking care of themselves, is a worn-out humbug, and in practice a mischief and a curse. And we believe that what the majority of the American people do for themselves will soon recognize as the right of each constituent part of the people.

We are by no means blind to the objections to withdrawing Federal supervision from the South. But they seem to arise mainly from a sense of the evils of Southern society, as we have often pointed out, are only to be got rid of through the slow, long, painful process of education. The radical evil is a deficiency in civilization, and men are not to be civilized by bayonets. The strong and continued supervision is regard for the safety of the freedmen. But the hard truth is that the freedmen must suffer, in one way and another, till education has raised them and humanity has paraded the lower class of the white race to where they are now, the slave class, and the brutality in a portion of the ruling class, are a growth of centuries, and their effects must long appear in various forms of injustice. No one deplores this more profoundly than we do. We are however trying to cure the evil by military force. Even in a physical sense, our little army, with a vast frontier and a chronic Indian danger, is totally incapable of protecting the four million blacks scattered over the South. Quite as much, in a moral sense, it is incapable of bringing the blacks and whites into right relations, except by surrounding both with educating and civilizing influences. And whatever has been done to protect the freedmen in recent years by military force, is far outweighed by the injury of teaching them to look for protection for what they want.

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