

THE EDITOR'S COMMENTS.

SACRIFICES FOR PRINCIPLE.

In the early part of President Johnson's administration, when it was manifest that it was to be a discordant and tempestuous one, he conceived the idea of organizing a very select company and making a tour of a considerable part of the country, embracing those cities which were then recognized as strategic points, such as New York, Philadelphia, Chicago, Detroit, St. Louis, Louisville and so on. This expedition a Republican humorist who masqueraded as a Democrat and wrote under the pseudonym of Petroleum V. Nasby made famous by dubbing it "Swingin' Round the Circle." It was a new thing, but has been practiced more or less ever since. Its object was to allay as far as possible the growing feeling against the President and his administration by mingling with the people, speaking to them and in a general way showing them that genuine democracy and a regard for the rights of all prevailed at headquarters. The trip was a failure and instead of allaying the growing feeling had but the effect of adding fuel to the flames; and what direct opposition did not accomplish was brought about by Nasby with his irresistible humor and withering sarcasm.

Some people, very many in fact but a few of them friends, thought Johnson's policy and practices all wrong. They held that he was too much disposed to ignore the prevailing feeling among the people of the North and lend his aid to the lately conquered states of the South at a time when he could accomplish nothing but "his own shame and the odd hits;" furthermore, that he was not politic enough for a politician nor sagacious enough for a statesman. His purpose of bringing about the immediate restoration of ante bellum conditions was looked upon as a contempt of the co-ordinate power of Congress, which had enacted and was in the process of enacting reconstruction measures along lines of its own selection. These were in consonance with radical Republican ideas and were aimed at holding the Southerners who participated actively or passively in the rebellion in a state of disfranchisement and subjugation for a probationary period, excepting only such as applied for clemency under circumstances and in accordance with forms prescribed by Congress itself. The plain intent and effect of this, so far as practical politics was concerned, was to give the radicals a prolonged lease of power. The Southern states were admitted back to the Union one by one after they had elected Republican officers and ratified the Fifteenth Amendment to the Constitution, giving the colored men the right to vote. Of course these would almost to a man act with those who gave them freedom and enfranchisement, and with the white men coming back to the condition of suffrage singly and in small squads, the situation appeared to Johnson more of a partisan than a patriotic arrangement. The friction between Congress and himself steadily grew. He vetoed every measure tending to support the objectionable conditions referred to and Congress as regularly and with the utmost promptness passed them over his veto. A crisis was inevitable. The President, after three years of haggling, worrying and wearing with the legislative branch of the government, was impeached. The House of Representatives framed an indictment containing eleven counts, each charging him with a high crime and misdemeanor, the specifica-

tions setting out a disregard of his oath of office in ignoring the authority of Congress, trampling upon its dignity and seeking to render nugatory the laws which it made. Even then the President was unmoved. He faced the storm with the same stolid demeanor and intrepidity of purpose that had characterized him all along. To a friend who urged him to make a judicious use of his patronage privileges he replied that he wouldn't give a twenty-dollar post-office for any man's vote. After a long and exciting trial the Senate voted on the eleventh article of impeachment and the President was acquitted, enough moderate Republicans having voted with the Democrats to make the prosecution short by one vote of the necessary two-thirds to convict. He retired from the Presidency amid hootings, but he is better thought of now.

There is something more than political history to be learned from all this. It points a moral and adorns a tale. In any field of life in which advanced thought or soulful consideration is employed, a due regard must be had for conditions, surroundings and opportunities if success be the object sought. A man may be contented in his own mind with the knowledge that he is right and the belief that some day those who oppose him will see it as he does. But such are very rare. They are generally inspired men, but those of their day and place have minds and hearts at variance with the inspirational development and to seek to force it to acceptance at such times can mean only defeat for the purpose and frequently punishment of one kind or another for him who so falls. Galileo made the discovery that the earth revolved while the sun stood still, a doctrine at variance with that of the powers that were in the place and at the time he made his discovery, and he was compelled to make a humiliating public recantation. There have been many such instances—Faust, Watts, Stevenson and even Morse of this enlightened and advanced generation in this educated and progressive nation—met discouragement and failure for a time. A genius, a patriot, or one whose mind or heart is ever pushing him ahead of the struggling mass must expect little but opposition amounting to dislike, discord and too frequently failure and humiliation for himself. In plain terms, to be successful in life one must conform somewhat to the beliefs, circumstances, prejudices and peculiarities of the great majority of those by whom he is surrounded. Those who are contented with posthumous justice, with honors and rewards which they can never personally realize, may still have advantages which the unthinking many can never be the means of withholding from them. If the Andrew Johnsons and the Wendell Phillips and even the John Browns and others who suffered in this life did so because their principles put them ahead of their time, why may they not also lead the procession in another stage of action where rewards are not so capricious, so tardy or so useless when they come?

AN AWFUL TRAGEDY.

The killing and mangling of a little girl by a switch engine of the Oregon Short Line railway in this city this morning was a horrible thing, the most so of any event that has happened here for a long time. The worst of it is that it was apparently not altogether accidental; such engines are presumably always under control and the watch-

man employed by the company was clearly incompetent by reason of decrepitude with its attendant weakened faculties. Even with the responsibility fixed the tragedy is so awful a thing that its contemplation belittles all consideration of any kind except that the horrors attending. Some additional safeguards against such destroyers must be provided, especially in the densely populated districts; but in the absence of competent, careful and humane employees any precautions taken would be more or less unavailing. The afflicted relatives of the little victim and the immediate friends must be possessed of an anguish of soul that nothing mortal can heal.

ENGLAND AND AMERICA.

A feature of the procession of the lord mayor of London yesterday, Oct. 9, attracted much attention and was enthusiastically cheered by the immense crowds. It was a float representing Britannia and Columbia seated side by side under a canopy. The American flag was borne by a British sailor and the English flag by an American sailor. Thus the friendship existing between the English-speaking nations was beautifully typified in the vast capital of the British empire. It was a most significant incident.

Whatever is the cause of the change in public sentiment in Great Britain toward the United States, such change is evident everywhere. Returned travelers say that the Stars and Stripes is seen floating by the side of the Union Jack in numerous places. The health of President McKinley is drunk at public functions, with sincere wishes for his success. And more significant still, the English people are studying up America. It is no longer fashionable to be ignorant about this Republic, and the result is that it has dawned upon our cousins on the other side that this is a great country in every respect. The idea that Indians still roam the streets of New York and Chicago no longer obtains. The victories in the Philippines and in Cuba are looked upon as Anglo-Saxon achievements, reflecting honor upon Great Britain no less than upon the United States. Such are the prevailing sentiments. England is proud of Dewey and Sampson and Schley and expects us to be equally proud of her Gen. Kitchener.

This, it seems to us, is as it ought to be. Lord Salisbury, in his speech at the banquet, pointed out that the present era is marked by unhappy omens, notwithstanding the invitation of the czar to a peace congress. "We see nations decaying," he said, "whose government is so bad that it can neither maintain the power of self-defense nor retain the affection of its subjects, and when this occurs there always are neighbors impelled by some motive—it may be the highest philanthropy or it may be the natural desire of empire—to contest as to who shall be heir to the falling nation and that is the cause of war." With this danger ever present, the friendship between the two English-speaking nations would be a safeguard. There is no power in the world that would assail Great Britain hastily and for some trivial cause as long as by her side stands the great American Republic; nor is there any power that would court a conflict with the United States if that would mean a war with Great Britain too. Lord Salisbury correctly regards the appearance of the United States among the European diplomats as a "grave and serious" event, but one that is likely to conduce to the interests of Great Britain—that is, as long as those interests are identified with the best interests of humanity in the direction of enlightenment, liberty and progress.