THE EVENING NEWS.

Saturday, Oct. 24, 1874.

Bayonets as Peacemakers.

The treatment of the Southern problem as a revival of the issues of the rebellion is ceasing to satisfy the better sentiment of the North. It is widely felt among intelligent men that the outrages upon the colored people are grossly exaggerated for political effect, and, in especial, that Federal military interference is not the best way to stop them.

There is no doubt that in certain localities the freedmen have had ill-usage, and in some cases very gross ill-usage. But, as to the extent of it, testimony is to be received with great care. There are at the South a class of adventurers whose political existence depends on keeping the country in a state of alarm in behalf of the freedmen. Many of these men hold office under the general government, and at the same time control the local Republican vote: thus they have double access to the public ear, through governmental channels, and through partisan organs at the North. Thanks to these gentry the reports of ku-kluxism which flood the country just before an election have to be taken with large discount. Again, the North is slowly realizing what an element of barbarism yet inheres in Southern society; that respect for life is far lower throughout the South than at the North; and that the disorders in which the freedmen suffer [illegible] morals which can only be raised by slow influences of time and education. You cannot civilize men by bayonets; and a southern community cannot be brought to the New England standard by the intervention of United States marshals with the army at their back.

Here we are, almost ten years after the restoration of the Union. Are we still to go on attempting to secure order in half the country by marching United States troops to the scene of every robbery or murder? Must the citizen of South Carolina or Louisiana rely for his personal safety upon the Attorney-General's office at Washington, and the military posse? If such a necessity existed, the achievement of which we have boasted would be half a failure. But the necessity does not exist. The time has come when the Southern communities should be left to take care of themselves, after the fashion of Anglo-Saxon communities. The day for bayonets and martial law has gone by. And when we have to fall back on them, as at New Orleans the other day, it is a confession that Government had previously blundered. It had, in fact, grossly blundered, in upholding Kellogg's usurpation at the start; and the military demonstration that repressed the armed revolt of a wronged people was a painful and mortifying necessity. *It was* a necessity, but it is the business of Congress and the Executive that such necessities do not occur again.

There would be the gravest objections to relying on the Federal military to repress local disturbances, if the military were always used in perfect good faith for the preservation of order. But it is notorious that in some cases they have been employed for a very different end. By the use of United States troops, worthless political gamesters have more than once restored their waning fortunes. We believe that this abuse has been exceptional, but a single instance, or even a reasonable suspicion of it, inflicts the deepest injury on the cause of free government.

The duty of the National Government toward the South is largely one of passiveness. The first thing is to forbear from needless and irritating interference. Let there be no useless exasperation of the whites, and no blow at the public school system, by the passage of the Civil Rights Bill. Then, each State should be left to take care of its own affairs. Not that this or any other policy will instantly or speedily cure all trouble. The South must at best have a long time for recuperation and readjustment. But the Southern communities are to-day as capable of managing their own affairs as they were before the war, or as the pioneer Western communities are now. The one conspicuous occasion for Congressional action is in the case of Louisiana. That State was subjected by Federal intervention to rulers never chosen by the people, and a part of whom, including the Governor, have a two years' longer tenure of office. The fit atonement for the first mischievous interference would be to so far undo it as to secure to the State a fair election. The Government cannot afford to stop short with the forcible maintenance in office of a set of usurpers; and having meddled once for mischief, and a second time for order, it ought to interfere once more for justice. But, with this as perhaps the solitary exception, the let-alone policy is the true one for Congress to pursue toward the South.

The Executive owes one great duty to the Southern States, and that is, to withdraw its moral support from the upholders of bad government. It needs only this—as to which there can be no question of constitutional right or propriety—it needs only this withdrawal on the part of the Administration from political alliance with unworthy men, to break the strength of the corruptionists even in South Carolina and Louisiana. It would be too much to expect an Administration to absolutely subordinate party interest to public welfare, until our politics have had a deeper regeneration than there is any immediate promise of. But at least in such a notorious case as that of Louisiana there should be an immediate change. In that State the same man, Packard, is as United States Marshal the chief representative of the government, and as Chairman of the Republican State Committee the prime wire-puller of the Kellogg faction. Not only the welfare of the State but the honor of the government and of the Republican party demand that this should not continue. The Executive can at least withhold countenance from the leaders in usurpation and fraud. We believe that one such conspicuous act of justice would go far to win the South; and that it needs, on the part of the President and of Congress, only a little wisdom joined with sincere good intent, to vastly promote the prosperity and harmony of the whole Southern community, black and white. The war by heroic surgery saved the nation's life; it is time for a spirit of true fraternity to heal the wounds.—*Christian Union.*

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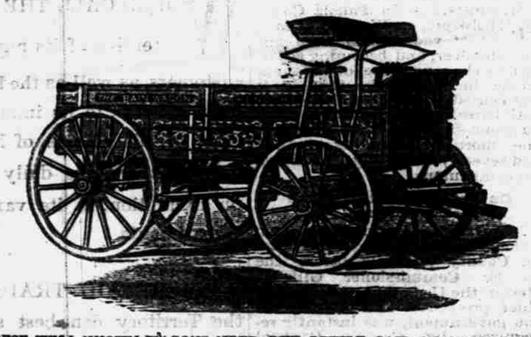

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