

position, or if they are valuable links in a trans-continental chain, it would be hard on producers in the Western States to impose artificial obstructions to their participating therein, as they would do if left to themselves.

#### PRESIDENT CLEVELAND'S MESSAGE.

President Cleveland's annual message contains a vindication of the tariff policy which he recommended to Congress at its last session. He points out that protection, on the high scale at which it is maintained in the Republic, transfers wealth by the force of law from the pockets of the masses to those of the manufacturers; and he is unable to look approvingly upon the accumulation of individual wealth by this means. He says: "As we view the achievements of aggregated capital, we discover the existence of trusts, combinations, and monopolies, while the citizen is struggling far in the rear, or is trampled to death beneath an iron heel. Corporations, which should be the carefully-restrained creatures of the law and servants of the people, are fast becoming the people's masters." It cannot be supposed that the President intended to condemn all aggregations of capital; for to them mankind owes a large part of the material progress which has everywhere taken place. To these aggregations we owe our railways, our telegraphs, our banking facilities, and a thousand other conveniences. They bring lenders and borrowers together; cheapen production and add to the comforts of life, besides reducing the burthen of interest which industry carries. So far, the effect of the aggregation of capital is beneficent. But when it becomes connected with trusts and combines aiming at monopoly, and is favored by abnormally high duties, the public feels instinctively that it is brought into the presence of a peril which it is the duty of statesmanship to remove.

If it be true, as publicly asserted, that the tariff policy of the President was defeated by organized bribery at the polls, then the fruits of the system are even worse than Mr. Cleveland ventures officially to describe them. The monopolists and combines are said to have expended large sums in the corruption of voters. This being true, the victory of the high tariff men may be a purchased victory. If the power of the Government is to be handed over to the highest bidder, the guarantees on which the nation has been accustomed to rely for the maintenance of its liberty would lose their effectiveness. It is evident that a struggle between monopolies, combines, and the better elements of the nation is on the point of taking place. So long as the masses are corrupt and the power of corruption can be wrung from the public by legislative devices, the two parts of the system mutually support one another. Corruption, the support of the system, is the evil to be attacked; so long as it can work without effective check, the danger that it will dominate the legislature will continue to exist. Various plans of attack are proposed, and it is much to be hoped

that some of them will in the end be found effective.

President Cleveland informs Congress in effect that he regards his old Retaliation Message as still in order. The facts show pretty clearly that Congress, as at present constituted, will not take that view of the situation. When the message first appeared, the Senate refused compliance with its recommendation; and the change which the House of Representatives has undergone, in the November elections, has probably brought it into harmony with the Senate. We do not look for hostile legislation from Congress, to which the President remits the whole question. His doing so, would seem to indicate that he will not issue a hostile proclamation on the strength of existing legislation.

Lord Sackville is accused of "unpardonable conduct," of "interference by advice and counsel with the suffrages of American citizens in the very crisis of the presidential election," and "also in his subsequent public declarations, to justify his action, superadding impugnement of the Executive and President of the United States, in connection with important questions now pending in controversy between the two Governments." This catalogue of crimes is made out of very trivial incidents, in which Lord Sackville could not possibly have had any intention to interfere at all, any desire to advise, any object to attain. He was indiscreet enough to write a private letter, in answer to questions asked under solemn asseverations of secrecy, and became the victim of a premeditated betrayal of trust. His fault was that he did not suspect the tricks of American party politicians; and he made the further mistake of assuming that he was at liberty to defend himself by using language about the election campaign which everybody else was at liberty to use, and in fact was using every day. It is preposterous to describe, as Mr. Cleveland does, these incidents as an offence "most grave," and "involving disastrous possibilities to the good relations of the United States and Great Britain, constituting a gross breach of diplomatic privilege and an invasion of the purely domestic affairs and essential sovereignty of the Government to which the envoy was accredited." If Mr. Cleveland had not felt the smart of personal criticism, he might have shown less sensitiveness. In making use of such extravagant language, he has committed at least as great a blunder as Lord Sackville was guilty of in his interview with the newspaper reporter; but there is no one to call him to account, or he might have shared the penalty which he had himself inflicted. He had a difficult task to perform in the necessity imposed upon him of defending the action of the executive towards the ambassador; and it is impossible to congratulate him upon the success with which it has been performed.

Besides the fishery question on the east coast, three others are mentioned by the President, which, in his opinion, claim adjustment: the Behring seal fishery, the Alaska boundary, and the affording of relief to vessels in distress on the lakes. International aid is being asked to preserve the fur seal in Behring Sea from destruction.

From this general statement but little can be learned of the drift of the negotiation. But it means that foreign nations are to be asked by the United States to give a rest to the Alaska sea fishery. Is the Alaska Company to go on meanwhile making the most of its monopoly? The unseemly wrangle over the saving of life on the lakes is a scandal, in which human beings are made to appear of less account than the chance of making profit out of their misfortunes—a scandal which rests with Canada to put an end to, and which for her own credit she ought to do as quickly as possible. The President assumes that it is impracticable to make a precise survey of the boundary line between Alaska and Canada. By what process then can a boundary be established which it will be possible to ascertain on the ground? There is a treaty boundary described in words: how can we find it on the ground without a survey? How can we be sure that we are crossing it at any point, if there be no monuments to mark its position? The described boundary consists of a mountain summit, near the coast, and a meridional line the rest of the distance. This mountain summit is surely ascertainable. There is no doubt about the starting point in the mountains: it is fixed at the intersection of Portland channel and the 56° of north latitude. From this point, the boundary line follows the summit of the mountains parallel with the coast to the 141° of west longitude, and is coincident with that meridian to the Frozen or Arctic Ocean. It is a great advantage to have an exact starting point in the mountains. The north-east boundary presented a choice of heights of land, and the difficulty was to say which was the one mentioned in the treaty. The Alaska boundary starts at a spot in the mountains which can be exactly ascertained; thence the summit is to be followed, that is, the greatest heights from the boundary. If it be impossible to scale some of them, it may be possible to measure their height. Unless they be ascertained in some way, the boundary must remain nebulous. But there is a proviso in the treaty which, depending on the geography, may prevent the summit of the mountains forming the boundary line, at some points. Whenever the summit is more than ten marine leagues from the coast, the boundary is to be formed by a line parallel to the windings of the coast, and nowhere at a greater distance than ten marine leagues therefrom. To lay down the line thirty marine miles from the windings of the coast, along the whole distance, would be a task of great difficulty, and, as President Cleveland assumes, nearly impossible. And as both Governments assume that they will have to get along without a survey, their attitude seems to point to some compromise. The meridional line of 141° west longitude could be ascertained at any point, in case of dispute. Any agreement which would leave the line unsurveyed and unmarked would only postpone the difficulty. The present doubt would always be making itself felt, whenever mining or other adventurers should plant themselves on or near the line. There may, in view of the expense of a survey, be good