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THE CANADIAN Illustrated News.

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PARTY GOVERNMENT.

GOVERNMENT by party is perhaps the best possible, under present circumstances. But there need be no perhaps about it; for, so far as experience goes, it is the best, and is likely to remain so, until man learns to love self less and the general weal more. It is only, however, when confined within certain limits that we look upon it with a favoring eye, or regard it as an improvement upon the one-man power. Well, what are these limits, and where do they begin and end? The answer is short and easy. They begin and end in the Legislative Halls.—Not beyond that! exclaims some violent party man. "To the victors belong the spoils!" Exactly so, and, that with many, it is feared, is just the sum and substance of their political creed, and unless a healthy moral tone pervades this system, its tendency is to degenerate into a party struggle for office. We are not, indeed, so unselfish as to expect that a government, when it has an office at its disposal will not be inclined to favor those who favor it, but we do maintain that qualification, for the performance of required duties wherever found, ought to be the test in the selections for the filling of public offices, and to keep them dangling as a bait, before the eyes of political partisans, is an injury to the country at large. If then we look so lightly on the claims of the followers of the men in power, belong to whatever party they may, even to their being appointed to a vacant office, how shall we express our dissent, when another has been removed, simply because he happened to entertain somewhat different political notions, to make room for one of the pure orthodox faith. The man who holds, and the government who acts upon the theory of filling all offices with their political friends may be fairly regarded as making the interests of the country subservient to their own. If it could be shown that such a course was absolutely necessary, in order that the affairs of the country, might be conducted with that secrecy and unanimity, which are necessary, in order to the completing and carrying out the measures of the government, we could understand that there was some reason for the change. If the expectations of the friends of either party were restricted to offices, in which the information acquired might be used against the government, there would be less of that violent partisan feeling which is so often seen at election contests. But what does the country gain by substituting one man for another, though both were competent, in the management of its affairs; nothing that we are aware of. The question then returns why make the change, because party interests must have precedence of all others.

There is something noble and independent, something that carries conviction to the mind that a man is in earnest, which is truly refreshing in this age of shams, who, while knowing that he is in the power of his opponents, steadily adheres to his principles, and does his best to advance them, by every legitimate method. Such a character ought rather to beget confidence than distrust, and might safely be relied on, in the performance of his duties to his country, which is surely all that can be reasonably expected of him. But no, he must profess certain political dogmas, ere he can

be accounted worthy; must be known as a friend of the men in power, which may be expressed in that not very elegant, though expressive phrase of 'claw me and I'll claw you.' Such friendship the country can easily dispense with, and be none the loser. It is but a poor excuse to offer, that this rewarding the victorious party with office is carried to a greater extent in some countries than our own. To rest satisfied when we find that we are in advance of some of our neighbors, is a very questionable kind of progress, and as, get as near perfection as possible, is the aim with everything else, so we trust that the larger and better spirit of acting for the good of the country and not for the individual, will more and more pervade our politics.

AMERICAN WAR.

THE Northern Army it is said have gained a great battle in Tennessee. It was long and bloody, but the South at length withdrew under the cover of night, and left Murfreesboro to be taken possession of by the Federals. There is still some doubt whether the retreat of the Confederates was compulsory or merely a change of their line of operations, at all events, they were not hard pressed, for it is not certainly known where they have gone to, but are supposed to have fallen back upon Fayetteville. Time will tell who has gained the advantage in this severe and long-contested battle.

BATTLEFIELD OF STONE'S RIVER.

TENNESSEE, JAN. 2.—The terrific battle of Stone's river is not yet decided. It has continued three days with intermissions yesterday and to-day.

After the great battle of Wednesday the enemy persisted in massing upon our right to cut us off from Nashville. Our right was thrown out to Oslennings creek, but on Thursday finding our right too strong they suddenly rushed upon our centre, but were bitterly repulsed by the left of the corps commanded by Thomas and the right of Crittenden's corps.

Later in the day they fiercely assailed the right centre, and were again repulsed. Both sides spent the remainder of the day in sharp skirmishing and manoeuvring for a position. During that night the enemy appeared to be concentrating again upon our right.—Their commands were distinctly heard in our camps, but suspecting a ruse, Gen. Rosecrans threw Beatty's brigade of Van Cleave's division across the river on our left, with supports, where they rested. About ten o'clock this morning the enemy made another formidable rush at our centre, but were repulsed. At between three and four o'clock this afternoon a tremendous mass of the enemy was suddenly precipitated upon Beatty's brigade, and drove it, after a gallant struggle, clear back across the river. Negley's division, which had always immortalized itself, and its heroic commander, and the faithful division of Jeff. C. Davis were thrown in successively, and the most desperate contest of the battle ensued. Both sides seemed furiously determined to win a victory, and both threw in their artillery, until nearly all the batteries of the two armies were at work. The uproar of the musketry and artillery was of the most furious description. The whole field was soon shrouded in a pall of smoke. Our brave fellows were sadly cut up, but they marched to the assault with unflinching determination. Negley at last ordered his division to charge.—The men pushed forward without faltering, and the enemy gave way. The 78th Penn. charged on the 26th Tenn. and captured its colors. Another rushed upon a battery, drove away the gunners, and seized it for their trophy. A great shout of victory roared along the whole line, and was carried from left to right, through the forests and back again. Gen. Rosecrans, in the midst of the fire and carnage ordered advance of the whole line, and at dark the dense forest blazed with fires of fierce intensity, our lines sweeping forward with wild enthusiasm but darkness made it impossible to press our advantage to a conclusion. Nevertheless the left was fairly established on the east bank of the river.—The centre advanced to the position heretofore held by the enemy, and the right again advanced almost to the line from which it was driven on Wednesday. Thus you perceive the decisive advantage is with us. To-morrow morning, however, the battle will be resumed. We now feel confident of ultimate victory. Our losses, however, have been serious. Since Wednesday morning they amount to about 4,000 killed and wounded, of which 600 were killed. Our loss of prisoners is several thousand, and the enemy on the first day captured about twenty-six guns and disabled six. We captured four from them on

Wednesday. The rebels loss, estimated by themselves, was between 4,000 and 5,000 killed and wounded, including Brigadier General Rains killed. Altogether we have captured about 1,000 prisoners from all the Southern States.

BATTLE-FIELD OF STONE'S RIVER.

TENNESSEE, JAN. 3.—It rained hard all this day. Both armies suspended hostilities save skirmishing. This evening we battered down a rebel house which concealed sharpshooters, and after short fighting drove the enemy out of a cover from which they damaged us.

Since the above was written the skirmish developed into a bitter fight. General Rousseau, worried by some rebels behind breastworks, sent Col. Beatty, of the 3d Ohio, with his regiment and the 88th Indiana, and they carried the works at the point of the bayonet, capturing many prisoners and holding the works.

All is quiet now, but the enemy is reported evacuating.

On Thursday morning the sun rose through a mass of thick mist and fog, and just as he made his appearance the pickets of the enemy opened a brisk fire upon Palmer's division, which constituted the right wing of General Crittenden's command. A few of our men were wounded, and our pickets manifested some disposition to give way. Two batteries however, moved up to their support, and the cannonade was so brisk that the whole of our forces rushed to arms, expecting an immediate renewal of the battle on a grand scale; but the rebels did not seem disposed to make the fight general; they brought out a battery or two, which attempted to reply to ours, but which were silenced completely in five or six minutes from the time they commenced to fire. Their pickets were also driven back and several prisoners taken, and the sounds of battle, except the occasional dropping of musketry, again ceased. From this time until half-past one in the afternoon, there was no fighting, with the exception of occasional skirmishes between the pickets.

At the last time mentioned, an attack was made upon our right where Daniel McCook's command had been mustered together after the repulse of Wednesday. His men anxious to redeem their character, lay close behind some temporary breastworks of stone and logs, until the rebels were within a few hundred yards of them. Then the opened, and the butternuts reared in confusion in the cedar thickets in which they had been concealed all the morning on Thursday, leaving a number of their dead and wounded in an intervening field. On the centre of our left, where a part of Gen. Sheridan's division was posted, a brisk firing was kept up between the pickets until near night, when the rebels becoming bold, once more advanced in considerable force into an open field. This time our men no longer remained behind their breastworks, but charged upon the enemy, and put them to flight, a single company of the Twenty-seventh Illinois capturing 150 prisoners. A number of shells from some of our batteries quieted the rebels for the remainder of the evening. The fighting on Thursday was at no time on a large scale, amounting really to no more than heavy skirmishing. Both armies seemed inclined to rest after the dreadful contest of the day before.—The weather was cold and clear a part of the day, but during the night there was an ugly drizzling rain, from which our soldiers, without shelter of any kind, suffered severely.

There was nothing of any importance occurring Thursday night; scarcely a shot from either side was heard on Friday morning until nearly nine o'clock. Then a terrible cannonade commenced, and raged for half an hour all along the centre of our line. The enemy's shot and shell flew thick and fast up the railroad and turnpike, and all over the open ground occupied by the centre of our army. One of our batteries was moved to our front and had more than half the horses killed and disabled by the rebel fire; but it soon became evident that the enemy's artillery was inferior to our own, and after Loomis had knocked to pieces a rebel battery of large brass guns, which was situated near the turnpike, directly in front of Murfreesboro, the others hastily drew off, and there was again a lull in the storm. Our loss in this artillery duel was about one hundred killed and wounded. From the reports of rebel prisoners, I am led to believe that the enemy's loss was very considerable. There was nothing more than heavy skirmishing from this until four o'clock P. M.

I returned last night to Nashville, from the battlefield at Murfreesboro, and, after a tedious ride on the cars, during which I was engaged in writing out these despatches, I arrived late this evening at this place. I say I left the field, but not, thank God, until I was able to report a glorious success for the arms of the Union. The battle of Wednesday displayed in a most striking manner the valour of our troops, the earnestness of our officers, and the genius of Gen. Rosecrans; but the result, on the whole, seemed to be against us, and there was a general feeling of despondency throughout our army. On Thursday there was little disposition manifested on either side to renew the battle, and this feeling continued until after the cannonade of Friday morning,

the result of which did much to encourage and inspire our soldiers, and make them ready for the great event that took place in the afternoon of that day. General Van Cleave's division, belonging to General Crittenden's corps, had been thrown across Stone river on Thursday in anticipation of an assault upon our left, similar to that upon the right on Wednesday, or for a purpose which perhaps it is not prudent to intimate. It was posted upon a low eminence, almost overlooking Murfreesboro, and in this situation formed, as indeed it had done before, the extreme left wing of our army. It was about 4 o'clock in the evening, when no one anticipated a renewal of the battle, that the rebels advanced in overwhelming force, under the command of Breckenridge, who seems to have been all day in charge of the right wing of their army, and threw themselves with terrible impetuosity upon Van Cleave's division. This portion of our forces was in command of Colonel Beatty, of the 19th Ohio, Gen. Van Cleave having been wounded on Wednesday. The assault of the enemy was speedily announced to the rest of the army by a dreadful war of artillery and a deafening rattle of musketry. Everybody rushed instantly to arms.

For half an hour the men of Van Cleave's division held their own against five times their number, but finding it impossible to withstand one-third of the entire rebel army began to give ground. Two brigades slowly retired, the enemy following with great determination, until at length our men were pushed into the river, many of them dyeing the water with their blood. The third brigade stood its ground somewhat longer and fought, if possible, more obstinately; still they too were just on the point of giving way, when Negley's division, which was near the centre when the battle began, came rushing up to the rescue, with loud cheers.

The soldiers advanced to the river side, delivered a few terrible volleys, which effectually checked the rebel onset, and then plunged into the stream itself and waded across, all the time pouring their bullets into the face of the foe. An adjacent hill, covered with woods, was just upon the other side of the river, and upon ascending a tolerably steep bank, a fence was reached, which separated the woods from the open ground through which the river runs. Here the rebels attempted to make a stand, and poured a leaden hail into our ranks as they clambered up the river bank; but the soldiers of the Union were no longer to be checked.—They rushed up to the fence, and hurled the enemy away from it at the point of the bayonet. The whole woods then resounded with the roar of battle, our men continuing to drive the enemy steadily before them.—Colonels T. R. Stanley and Miller, commanding brigades, urged forward their men with dauntless courage, and drove the rebels entirely out of the woods and across some cornfields which just lay in front of the last strip of timber which separated our army from Murfreesboro. These cornfields were literally covered with the rebel dead and dying. The enemy had now been driven a mile and a half, and nothing but the coming of night prevented the gallant Negley and his men from pushing into Murfreesboro. I rode over field the at ten o'clock that night. Our forces held undisputed possession of the contested ground.—The slaughter of the enemy was terrible to contemplate. The woods by the river and cornfields, resounded with the groans of the wounded and dying. At least two thousand of the enemy fell in this glorious affair, while our own loss could not have exceeded five hundred. More than a thousand prisoners were left in our hands. Several rebel flags were captured and at least one battery of artillery. When the victory was announced to the rest of the army, their cheers fairly rent the air, and must have spread dismay and terror amongst the rebel hosts.

USE OF TOADS IN AGRICULTURE.—The toad affects gardens as much as the lord of creation. You will find him in a hole in the wall, in the strawberry patch, under the vines, or among the cucumbers. He is not handsome, but serene and dignified as a judge. He executes judgment upon all bugs, worms, snails, and pests of the garden, in the most summary way. See what a capacious maw he has, occupying the whole space from his fore legs to his haunches. He is the very incarnation of stomach, and his gastronomic feats would do credit to an alderman. He is too useful to be without enemies. Man slanders him. He misses a few strawberries from his patch, and lays it to the toad, who stands like a sentinel guarding his treasures. It was the snail who did the mischief before the toad took up his station. Or it was the robin who slyly snapped up the berries, and flew off into the neighboring tree, leaving the poor toad to bear his sins. But you see by the look of his honest face that he is guiltless. Those lustrous eyes are above stealing. One fat bug would give him more pleasure than all the fruit in your garden. Cultivate the friendship of toads, for they take the insects that the birds are apt to overlook. They are as easily domesticated as birds, never sing when you do not want them to, are quiet and unobtrusive, and are profitable pets and fellow-workers. Birch the boy that teases toads.