

# THE WEEK.

Fifth Year.  
Vol. V., No. 1.

Toronto, Thursday, December 1st, 1887.

\$3.00 per Annum.  
Single Copies, 10 Cents.

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## PROSPECTS OF THE FISHERY NEGOTIATIONS.

SINCE the date of my letter to THE WEEK giving sundry reasons why the selection of Mr. Chamberlain as the chief Fisheries negotiator for Her Majesty's Government cannot be considered as agreeable to the American Executive, or helpful to a settlement of the Fisheries controversy, various things have happened that may be held to have affected the situation as it was then and therein described.

In the first place, the Democratic victory in New York has sensibly strengthened the position of President Cleveland's Administration throughout the country. The malcontents of his own party realise that their factious opposition to him must cease at their peril, and he is thus assured of the firm and united support, by his own partisans, of any arrangement that may be effected by Messrs. Bayard and Chamberlain, and their respective *collaborateurs*. Considering how evenly the two great parties are balanced, an assurance that all who act with the Democratic party will be found on the side of the President, whenever he shall submit to the Senate the new treaty which Mr. Chamberlain has said must take the place of the old one, is a point full of hope and promise in respect of a ratification, with possibly enough of unimportant amendment to afford a dignified retreat for the Senate from its hitherto implacable attitude. The nominal secrecy of debate on treaties will afford no shelter to Senators of the Democratic party who might be disposed to desert or stab at their party leader, since every speech and vote will be as fully reported to those whose interest it is to know them as though the Senate should sit with open doors.

I have hitherto in these columns criticised the early course of Mr. Cleveland, in evading his duty as a party leader to maintain discipline among those who profess allegiance to the Democratic party, but it is improbable that ground for such criticism will exist hereafter, the President having found his strength as well as realised his duty, and the unruly having been forced, by the march of events, into a reasonable state of tractability. For all these reasons, it is certain that any settlement of the Fisheries question agreed to and advocated by the President will receive the support of a good one-half of the population. To this moiety must be added the people, considerable in numbers, and of more than the average of intelligence and influence, who have a personal liking for Mr. Cleveland, and a personal belief in his integrity and ability, and who will be found on his side, even if their being there shall be at the temporary sacrifice of partisan fealty.

From all that is said above, it would seem to be no exaggeration to say, that among the far-reaching effects of the New York election is the appearance of certainty given, in advance, to any solution of the Fisheries trouble that President Cleveland may propose to the Senate. Still, that certainty is but an "appearance" as yet, and the shadow cannot grow to substantiality till there has been some further development of the domestic political situation with reference to the Presidential campaign of next autumn. Just now there is a great deal of clamour and confusion in the

Republican ranks, some shouting that the Party cannot do without the electoral votes of New York, and others that New York may be offset by other States that are capable of being won, if effort to that end be timely made and vigorously pursued.

Then, there is that most perplexing question of Mr. Blaine, concerning whom there are two opinions among those who agree that New York is indispensable, the one faction contending that only Blaine can command the Irish vote, as he commanded it three years ago, when seven or eight out of every ten Roman Catholic priests were voluntary canvassing agents for him; and the other, that Mr. Blaine could not repeat his raid upon the Democratic host for its Irish and Romanist electors, and that, if he could, enough Republicans would be driven away by personal aversion to him to more than counterbalance the gain of Democratic votes. For the moment, the sentiment of the Republican leaders is rather against Mr. Blaine, and that of the masses decidedly so; but there may be an entirely different posture of affairs by the late spring of next year.

Should the Democrats fail (as they are quite likely to do), in their attempt at the approaching session of Congress to deal with the overshadowing question of the surplus revenue, they will fall into such general discredit as will be likely to affect unfavourably any innocent and meritorious measure of importance equal to that of the Fisheries question. Should they succeed in keeping their ranks together long enough and strongly enough to force any important tariff reduction bill through the House of Representatives, the Republican leaders will appeal to the Protectionist interests, and if they find them able to dominate the country, they will pocket any Fisheries treaty sent to the Senate, in the expectation of an opportunity to deal with the subject themselves at an early day. The conviction that under no circumstances would England fight for Canada or Canadian interests necessarily must influence the reception and disposition of the work of the Joint Commission now sitting at Washington, and from the British standpoint reduces the labours of the Commission to an ordinary attempt, by diplomatic procedure, to do away with an annoying conflict between rival and adjacent interests that affect on each side a particular fraction of the people; while from the American standpoint those labours are first to be looked at as a possible element in a domestic struggle of parties.

I do not venture to hazard the remotest guess at what the Joint Commission is likely to propose. Secretary Bayard has publicly said, since the arrival here of the British negotiators, that the American case is notorious and unmistakeable; hence it would seem that so far as it may fail to be reproduced in any arrangement that the negotiators may find themselves able to agree upon, it will have to be eliminated by a process of concession, for which counter concessions will have to be devised. If, on the contrary, the American claims are to be admitted in full, some compensation to Canada will have to be found, if there is to be an agreement.

The labours of the Commission are capable of ending in any of the following ways:

1. Disagreement.
2. Mutual abatement from the present respective claims.
3. Admission of the American claims, with pecuniary compensation to Canada.
4. Admission of American fishermen to all the privileges of Canadians, with pecuniary or tariff compensation to Canada; and if the latter, probably made large enough to permit Canadian tariff concessions to some appropriate American industries.

B.  
Washington.

## THE BALANCE OF MILITARY POWER IN EUROPE.— GERMANY, FRANCE, AND BELGIUM.

HAVING promised to give our readers the benefit of the views on the present position of European Politics by a writer in *Blackwood's Magazine*, which are opposed to Sir Charles Dilke's already expressed opinions, we subjoin part of the second article bearing the above title, dealing with some of the most important points, and arranged under heads as follow:

I.—*German and English Economy.* Economy, says Lord Randolph Churchill, and efficiency go hand in hand. We agree with him. We believe that efficiency is always economical, provided you can afford to pay for it, and we say that, on English evidence alone, Lord Randolph's notions of economy, by cheese-paring and cutting down of salaries, is a false one.