

THE COLLAPSE OF MR. CLEVELAND'S PARTY.

THE National Convention of the Democratic Party that nominated Mr. Cleveland for the Presidency produced a platform embodying a few concrete propositions on current political questions and numerous declarations of principles vaguely or ambiguously expressed. Under any rational view of the party system, Mr. Cleveland became the executor of so much of the Democratic policy as was definitely stated in the platform and the final expounder of the principles not reduced to practical form. In short, he became, at one and the same time, a constitutional executive and the leader of a political party, the two functions not necessarily conflicting, and the last-named virtually being complementary of the other.

In the execution of the constitutional office President Cleveland has been an exceedingly careful and conscientious officer, and enjoys his reward in the esteem wherein the people hold him, without regard to party affiliations. As the leader of his party, he has restricted his action to the appointment of Democrats to office, and to giving advice to party associates in matters of Federal legislation, without claiming precedence or authority for his views. This is simple abdication of his party functions, and is excused by him upon the ground that the Federal Constitution plainly marks out the powers and duties of the President in respect of legislation, and does not contemplate the exercise of initiatory power by that functionary. The fallacy in this argument is the assumption that the electorate will act, or are capable of acting, without party organisation, co-operation, and discipline, and that the Constitution contains within itself a specification of all the means, and the only lawful means, of practically working the system of government prescribed by it.

Mr. Cleveland deeming himself legally disqualified for the office of a party leader, and no provision existing in the party system for other leadership than that of the Presidential nominee or incumbent, the Democratic party speedily became any man's party, with the result hereinafter to be briefly indicated. Nobody outside of Congress possessed sufficient rank or influence to aspire to the post declined by President Cleveland, as will be seen by mention of the only names likely to occur to anybody in that connection, namely: Thurman, of Ohio; McDonald, of Indiana; Hill, of New York; and Bayard, of Delaware. Vice-President Hendricks was weak in the East. In the Senate there was not an eligible man; in the House were Messrs. Carlisle, Randall, and Morrison; but the two latter were and are leaders of the respective Protectionist and Free Trade sections, and the first-named belonged to the Free Trade faction, and is personally lacking in necessary qualities for leadership. The situation, then, was that a political party, charged with the responsibility of government, was without a leader and incapable of finding one. Having no leader, it had neither policy, coherence, nor discipline, and has had, since the election of Mr. Cleveland, but a nominal existence, convenient to some extent for the lower purpose of patronage, but unable to legislate or to make a record for use in the next general election.

It was inevitable that the first Democratic administration for a quarter of a century should make numerous changes in a civil service partisan to the core, and these changes could not, in practice, be effected without admitting local Democratic leaders to a considerable share in the selection of the new incumbents. Had the President and his heads of Department then said that no seeker after patronage could be recognised as a Democrat who was not sincerely committed to substantial reform of the tariff, demonetisation of "the buzzard dollar," the extension of stability of tenure and non-partisanship to all subordinate civil offices, and the limitation of Federal expenditure to strictly constitutional objects, there would have been to-day a Democratic party, a Democratic policy, and a Democratic record upon which to appeal to the intelligence of the voters of the whole Union two years hence. There is not to-day such a party, such a policy, nor such a record—nothing but an honest, earnest, and somewhat narrow-minded man to oppose to the disintegrating tendencies of a socialistic era, and to a compact body of clever and unscrupulous politicians, possessed of the still considerable prestige attaching to the name and tradition of the Republican Party, and bent on using it to oust the rabble called Democracy from its precarious hold upon a too-plethoric Treasury.

Perhaps Mr. Cleveland is excusable for not foreseeing in its full extent the legislative paralysis and demagogic activity that was to result from his too literal reading of the provisions of the Federal Constitution respecting the office of President; and while it is impossible that he should be unconscious of the state of his party, or the immediate consequences of that state, it may be that he does not realise his own responsibility for either. And yet his experience with the late so-called Dependent Pension Bill must have brought him somewhat near to a recognition of the truth. The history of that Bill shall be briefly indicated.

In 1862, during the civil war, an altogether reasonable law was passed for the pensioning of those disabled in the military or naval service, and of the widows and dependent children of those dying from wounds or disease contracted in the service. Under this law the annual charge for pensions steadily grew to thirty millions of dollars by 1867, and then began slowly to decline, from perfectly obvious, and natural causes. Stimulated by compassion for the desperately hurt, Congress began to grant special rates for special classes of disabilities, so that the totally disabled received at last seventy-two dollars per month, and, in the discretion of the administrative officers, any invalid pensioner might receive any rate between that maximum and two dollars per month. The pension roll has now grown to eighty-five millions per annum, and must, even without further legislation, steadily enlarge upon that sum for a considerable number of years ahead. The last proposition was to depart altogether from the theory of the pension laws (a theory already largely ignored in practice), and grant a pension of twelve dollars per month to any person who, having

served in the army or navy, is now, or shall hereafter be, adjudged incapable of earning a support by his labour. This would have increased the outlay for pensions by the amount of at least seventy millions of dollars per year, lasting for at least twenty years. The Republicans voted solidly for the Bill, in the double hope of placating the "soldier vote," as it is called, and embarrassing the Administration by serious deficits in the revenue. The Democrats voted largely for it, through fear of giving a partisan advantage to their adversaries in the next elections, if they did not so vote. The President interposed a strong veto to the measure, and then, having no recognised authority over his party members in Congress, had to undergo a humiliating and anxious experience in winning thirteen Democratic votes to sustain the veto. Every Democratic member of the House Committee on Pensions joined in a report against the veto, couched not only in terms of arrant demagoguery, but absolutely insulting to the President, their self-effaced leader. This one fact shows the state of the party.

Washington.

ELECTIONS IN NOVA SCOTIA.

THE result of the recent contest in the Province of Nova Scotia will be a surprise to everybody throughout the Dominion, and especially in this Province itself. This is a Province where party lines are pretty well drawn, as well, indeed, as in Ontario. The committees, which, in June last, worked the various constituencies in the interests of the Liberal-Repeal party and the Tory party, respectively, are practically the same as those which pushed matters in the contest just over. In view of the fact that, after full and intelligent discussion, the Liberal party, with Repeal as a motto, made a clean sweep in June, and the same forces, with the same standard, suffered a severe defeat the February following—all ordinary calculations in regard to what the people will do must be suspended.

In some constituencies the changed result is easily accounted for. Take, for instance, Annapolis. This county is a very intelligent and evenly divided constituency. Both parties have a good organisation, and there is only a mere fraction to determine the result. In June last the Attorney-General, Longley, contested the seat with a strong local man as a colleague. The result was that he was elected by about twenty, while his colleague was defeated by five. The Dominion lists were rather more favourable to the Tory party than the local, and consequently, after another terrible neck-and-neck struggle, it is not wonderful that the margin should have been on the Conservative side by twenty or thirty votes. The same thing is applicable to Hants, where the Liberals in June had only a bare majority, and are now defeated by about one hundred. But Halifax, which gave a Liberal-Repeal majority of over one thousand in June, only succeeds in electing one of the two Liberal candidates by a narrow majority. Shelburne, which declared for Repeal by a majority of four or five hundred in June last, just saves the Liberal-Repeal candidate by thirty-two majority. Queen's, which is a very small constituency, gave the Liberal-Repeal candidate a very emphatic majority in June, and the Liberal candidate, who was at the head of the poll in June, and is undoubtedly a talented and popular man, Mr. Mack, resigned his seat to be the Liberal candidate for the Commons, and he is defeated by thirteen majority. And yet party lines are well drawn in Queen's.

Of course, it is not surprising that the three Ministers carried their seats, though the majorities are very surprising, except in the case of Mr. Thompson, who managed to squeeze in by a majority of forty-two. But it must be remembered that his opponent is the most popular man in the county, and carried the seat in the face of Mr. Thompson's influence in June last by five or six hundred majority. The Liberals held their own in Yarmouth and Guysborough, where their candidates have overwhelming majorities. And they redeemed three constituencies very handsomely,—Lunenburg, Richmond, and King's. In the last constituency it is but fair to say that the overwhelming majority for Dr. Borden is due more to personal than political considerations. The respectable elements of the county were determined to be rid of the disgrace of being represented by a disreputable boodler.

To sum up, Nova Scotia has declared in favour of the present Government and the National Policy—more emphatically, indeed, than any of the other large Provinces. This gives a sort of death-blow to the Repeal movement. The hands of the Provincial Government are completely tied by this vote, which is entirely unexpected. But the fact remains that the people, as a whole, are not satisfied with the existing condition of affairs, and that trouble is ahead for the Confederation is beyond all doubt. The end is not yet. If the United States could be induced to offer a Commercial Union to Canada, there would be a great tumbling up of affairs.

One remark more on the Nova Scotia elections. It is likely that all over the Dominion the glory of the Government victory in this Province will be bestowed upon Sir Charles Tupper. It will be said, "Tupper did it." Nothing could be more inaccurate. His coming had no appreciable effect on a single constituency in the Province. If he had remained comfortably in London to this hour, the result in every constituency, except Cumberland, would have been exactly as it is.

Another point to be considered is that money was used enormously in Nova Scotia on the Government side, and that *this*, and not the beauties of the National Policy, nor the heroics of Sir Charles Tupper, carried the majority of seats in Nova Scotia. No doubt Sir John Macdonald and his colleagues realised fully the importance of putting an end to the secession movement in Nova Scotia. It has been unquestionably a source of great annoyance to them. Therefore, special efforts were made to stamp it out. A secret agent travelled over the Province, and left his bag at each weak point