

# THE WISDOM OF ULYSSES.

## President Grant on the Great Questions of the Hour.

### A Quiet Chat With the General on the Joint High Treaty, the Ku Klux, Jeff Davis and Other Matters.

### How the Treaty of Washington Was Considered—An Act of Bad Faith on the Part of England if She Refuses to Ratify It.

### Mr. Fish Not to Retire from the Foreign Office.

### No Change in Our Policy Toward Cuba.

### Jeff Davis Making Republican Votes.

LONG BRANCH, June 2, 1871.

Yesterday closed drearily on this fogged village, and this morning gave a duller promise. A thick, impenetrable, wet mist floated in from the sea, and all that was beautiful here was wrapped in vapor. After breakfasting on porpies—which I am informed are very plentiful and easily caught—I sauntered along the road in the direction of the President's cottage. After ten o'clock the heavy banks of fog parted, obedient to gusts of unsteady wind from the land, and the sun shone out warm and genial. A sharp walk of twenty minutes or so brought me over the creek to the hill at the top of which the President's house is situated. This building has already been described very fully in the *HERALD*. The President was sitting in a rustic arm-chair on the portico, his father-in-law, Mr. Dent, near him, while Miss Nelie and Master Grant practised croquet on the lawn as I approached. Opening the yielding gate and walking rapidly on the gravelled walk toward the cottage, I stood before the President and paid my respects.

Those who assert that General Grant is difficult of approach, is reserved and shy, and reticent on matters of which he has especial knowledge, do not know the man. In the few minutes in which I was engaged in preliminary conversation with him my previously formed ideas of

#### HIS TEMPER AND TACT

were completely changed. General Grant is only reserved in the presence of those whom he does not know, is silent only from policy, and has abundant tact. There is not a more keenly observant man living, or one more capable of taking in at a glance and forming an instant and right opinion of a situation than the President. He had received from his steward the morning papers, but had not read them. General Grant smiled pleasantly and gave me a kindly greeting. Offering me a seat beside him, he lit the worn end of what was once a good cigar, pulled his hat a little further over his eyes, crossed his legs and asked

#### THE NEWS OF THE MORNING.

I gave him the budget of morning intelligence very briefly. The following conversation then took place—the President fully aware that he was talking to a *HERALD* correspondent:—

"Some fellow," said the President, "pretending to be a gentleman, induced my steward to show him over my cottage before I came. I hear that he has published a lot of stuff in a New York paper, describing the furniture of my bedroom and the quality of the spittoon in the hall. Why are these creatures tolerated?"

"They are ignored, Mr. President. What they do or do not say makes little difference. Their ravings are as impotent as the clamors of a certain portion of

#### THE ENGLISH PRESS.

I suppose you have seen that they are not satisfied with the international half loaf offered them, but want the whole. "The *Saturday Review* is indignant about the Treaty of Washington."

"They will grumble, of course; but they won't grumble long. The treaty was fully and ably discussed, and, in my judgment, is the best settlement possible of the outstanding differences between us and Great Britain. There is a good deal of misapprehension on both sides of the water concerning the Treaty of Washington."

"Indeed, Mr. President; in what respect?"

"It is thought by many that it was rushed through and acted upon a whole without proper consideration on the part of both governments. The facts are that every article of the treaty was submitted to me after it was adopted by the Commission and approved by me; and that each article was in the same way submitted to the British Cabinet and approved by the Ministers of the Crown at once. The English Commissioners spent a great deal of money in telegraphing the sections of the treaty. The Queen of England pledged her signature beforehand. I therefore regard the treaty as practically ratified. There will be pecuniary considerations, of course."

"What pecuniary considerations, Mr. President?"

"Measures will have to be adopted on both sides to carry out

#### THE PROVISIONS OF THE TREATY.

Our House of Representatives will, I feel certain, act patriotically and wisely in the matter. The treaty must be ratified and made a law of both nations—it is necessary—the necessity is immediate. As far as we are concerned we would like to have better terms; but there were two parties to the bargain. If I had it all my own way I think I could make it more favorable to us. (A smile.) The point aimed at was not merely a pecuniary satisfaction for our losses by the Alabama and other cruisers from British ports, but the settlement of an irritating and disturbing question likely any day to bring the two nations into armed conflict. My aim was by this treaty to secure peace through justice, and I believe I have succeeded. No apprehension need be felt as to the course of the British people. I would regard it as

#### AN ACT OF BAD FAITH

on their part to reject the treaty after its almost unanimous acceptance by our Senate. The English must surely prefer a fair settlement of our differences with them, for which this treaty provides, than to nurse a cause of war. Settlement or war were the alternatives. (As the President said this he threw away his cigar with a sudden jerk.) The final ratification will be a blessing to both countries."

"The Canadians, Mr. President," I then remarked, "don't seem pleased."

"Well, I suppose," he said, in answer, "they will, after a while. They will be reconciled to it by and by. And why shouldn't they? The fishery clauses of the treaty are as favorable to them as to us—perhaps more so. I'll be glad if they settle the matter at once and be done with it. The Canadian fishermen don't amount to much for us, while the equivalents we grant must be considerable to them. I don't attach much importance to

#### THE PECUNIARY CONSIDERATION

one way or the other. The pith of the thing is the avoidance of war. It was a dangerous question to be held open. Our fisheries were always a trouble and an annoyance. The fishermen of the East who fish on the Canadian coast have but little respect for treaties or engagements. They are rough fellows, hardy, self-reliant and are a law unto themselves. They insist on going where they like and doing what they like. Of course they find opposition; and, too, whether they are right or wrong they are sure to have supporters in many quarters. Indeed, the public sympathy is always with our fishermen, no matter what they do. This backing up of our own people under all circumstances shows a lively, patriotic spirit, but it has its evils. We are forced to send men-of-war to the Canadian coast to protect these men from the consequences of their own acts; the English must send armed ships to watch the doings of ours, and so the relations between us and Great Britain, which ought, and I now

believe will be of the friendliest nature, are constantly disturbed by

#### ANTICIPATION OF STAY-IF.

This fishery affair was not the worst difficulty we had to meet, but it was very embarrassing. Now I hope the whole affair will be settled. There were so many questions between us and England demanding settlement that war seemed the only alternative. It is well, sir, that war has been avoided. I prefer the treaty to war; war would be hurtful to both nations and profitable to neither. It might be ruin to one."

"In the paper in which the furniture of your laundry and kitchen is described, Mr. President, I see that you are credited with the intention of a radical change in your foreign policy, and also that the Secretary of State is about to resign. It is not necessary to ask if the article is baseless?"

"No, sir. There is not a word of truth in these statements whatever they are. Not a whisper of

#### MR. FISH'S RETIREMENT

has lately passed me or any of the Cabinet. Mr. Fish will not leave the Cabinet or resign the seals of the State Department with my consent while I am President. He responded unwillingly to my call and entered upon the arduous duties of the Foreign Office with diffidence: he has discharged them well. He has been faithful, patriotic and diligent. I should be grieved if he resigned; but he won't resign. Now, as to Cuba. There has been no discussion in the Cabinet in reference to Cuban affairs of late to justify what you say is in that paper. The policy of the administration is unchanged in regard to Cuba. We are mindful of our obligations to friendly nations, while careful of our rights. The United States will not be unjust while I am President. We will do as we would wish to be done by. The condition of affairs in the Island of Cuba does not seem to me or to Mr. Fish to demand action on our part. Time heals more wounds than medicine, and patience is

#### A VERY GOOD SPECIFIC.

"You are glad to get away from Washington, Mr. President? The Ku Klux legislation of the last session must have occasioned you an immense deal of annoyance."

"The disturbed state of the South and the Alabama claims question were certainly disturbing. They seem to have no connection, but you will understand otherwise." There were thousands of influential people in the South, treacherous and treasonable, who hugged the thought that

#### THE CAUSE OF SECESSION

would triumph whenever the country got involved in a war with England. These were they who helped on the Ku Klux for the encouragement of their agents abroad, and it was they who were most active in supporting a show of opposition to the national authority. I told Senators of this matter and urged them to act on the treaty with England at once. It was very important, sir. You will concede that it was wise to so urge the Senators? The settlement of the Alabama claims, as they are called, and all other differences with England will have the happy effect of

#### PREVENTING A WAR.

It will also destroy the hopes of the Southern rebels and perhaps persuade them to become peaceful, law-abiding citizens."

"While Jeff Davis is at large, Mr. President, will it not be difficult to allay Southern disaffection? Can he not be arrested under the Ku Klux law?"

"He might be imprisoned. But what would be the use? It would be like seizing a newspaper. It would only create sympathy for the sufferer and inflame passions now happily dying out. We can't afford to

#### MAKE A MARTYR OF JEFF.

He will find his own level in due time, and the Southern people will get tired of him. Besides," said the President, with a laugh, "Jeff is making all the country republican. Let him go; he's a wasted candle and will light no fire."

"It is pleasant, sir, to be able to turn from the consideration of themes of such vast importance and to enjoy the pleasures of inactivity in this quiet retreat."

"It is. I like the view here, and find pleasure in driving on these roads. I will drive a good deal this summer, after they water the roads. How do you like the house—nothing gaudy or ostentatious about it, eh? I can't see much magnificence. Can you?"

"It is quiet and unpretending enough, sir, for the President of the American republic."

"Yet I am abused for enjoying it after the labor of a year in Washington. The crowd and rush of people to the White House immediately after the adjournment of Congress is wearisome. People come from all the States, and New York sends a large delegation."

"I understand, sir, that you intend

#### GOING TO WEST POINT?"

"Yes; I always go there in the summer. I will leave here on Tuesday or Wednesday, and return, probably, on the following Monday."

After some further conversation—not, however, of a political character—I bade the President adieu, understanding that I was at liberty to publish the conversation I had the honor to enjoy, and which I have carefully reported. I left the grounds of the Presidential cottage fully impressed that General Grant is no sphinx.

The hotel people here are busily engaged in preparing for the coming week, which they hope will be the opening of a prosperous season.