

Will General Grant's Administration Be a Success or a Failure?

Everything in the machinery of the new administration seems to be running smoothly. The guillotine, at the rate of about one hundred per day, is taking off the heads of the Johnson office-holders, and the active republican politicians are coming in for a fair share of the spoils. General Grant has shown his disposition in many things to cultivate harmony with the Senate, and especially in his approval of the equivocal modification between the two houses of the Tenure of Office law. In his inaugural and in his appointments, including soldiers and civilians, patriotic female Union spies in the war, repentant rebels, and citizens of African descent, vulgarly called niggers, he has done something in behalf of all the cliques and factions of the dominant party, and has particularly tickled the fancy of Wendell Phillips on his latest ultimatum of the equal rights of the black man touching the offices. In a corresponding degree the democracy, rank and file, red hot and lukewarm, have become disgusted with the doling at Washington; so that General Grant now marks the dividing lines between the two parties even more distinctly than he did as the republican candidate on the Chicago platform.

From the results of the recent Connecticut election it would likewise appear that in advocating the proposed fifteenth amendment to the constitution giving equal suffrage to male citizens throughout the United States of all races and colors—white, yellow, red and black—General Grant has given a new popular impulse to this movement; for heretofore in Connecticut the republican party, whenever it has distinctly broached the question of negro suffrage, has been signally defeated. We might, then, plausibly conclude from all these facts and from the general demoralization of the forlorn democracy, that the prospect for General Grant's administration is all that could be desired, and that, after dispensing his rewards to the faithful till the offices are all filled, he has only to sit down and smoke the pipe of peace with Vice President Colfax as President of the Senate, in order to settle the question of the succession.

But all such estimates as these are shallow and fallacious. Every one of our Presidents so far who has had nothing better upon which to build than the spoils has been a failure. Tyler, Fillmore and Andy Johnson are the most notable examples. Poor Pierce and Buchanan failed—the one because he laid violent hands upon those great compromise measures on slavery which had given peace to the country, and the other because he lacked the moral courage to grapple with secession after the manner of Jackson. Since the time of Monroe we have had but two Presidents elected for a second term—Jackson and Lincoln. The re-election of Jackson resulted from his war against the old United States Bank as a financial monster and monopoly, absorbing the liberties of the people. The re-election of Lincoln resulted from his war with a great rebellion. The States and people adhering to the Union cause were satisfied with his efforts during his first four years in the prosecution of this war, and so they re-elected him as the surest and shortest way to finish it. With these two exceptions we have not had for forty-five years a President who has raised an issue sufficient to supplant his rivals and to give him a second term, and to all of them, after John Quincy Adams, the spoils have been a stumbling block, a delusion and a snare.

It is evident, then, that we can form no judgment of the issue of General Grant's administration from present appearances. All the advantages of the situation are his; but there are dangers ahead of fearful magnitude. For example, during his present term he must check the swelling tide of political corruptions and demoralizations resulting from the moral pestilence of the war, and we must have a financial system established from which the people shall experience a great relief from their present burdens of taxation, and foresee the removal, too, within the present generation of the incubus of the national debt, or the national election of 1872 may give us a touch of the decisive financial settlements of the great French revolution. It is folly to shut our eyes to the drift of public sentiment on this question. The masses of the people, looking at our present financial system of debt, taxes, national banks and bondholders, feel only the pressure of a financial oligarchy, "making the rich richer and the poor poorer," compared with which the old United States Bank was a farce, a humbug and a bagatelle.

But can we hope for the removal of these mountains of debt and taxation and spoliations and corruptions under General Grant within the four years to 1872? No. He may cut them down to a great extent; but if he cannot utterly remove them he must do something else for a popular diversion in his favor. Here are Cuba, St. Domingo, Mexico and the Central American States down to Darien. They are the locks and keys of the Gulf and of the American Isthmus passages from ocean to ocean. A decisive American policy on the part of General Grant will absorb all these outlying islands and States and add so largely to our material revenues as to reduce the national debt to a mere trifle. Then there are the Alabama claims, a proper basis upon which to negotiate the cession to the United States of her Britannic Majesty's North American provinces of the New Dominion, from Halifax to Vancouver's Island; for this thing, too, is in the order of "manifest destiny."

Here we have scope and verge enough for the most brilliant, imposing and powerful administrations in American history. Cuba at this moment presents a golden opportunity for a *coup d'état* that will electrify the country and open the way for the whole programme suggested. It is morally certain, too, that unless the public mind shall be diverted to these external attractions, it will recoil on our internal burdens of taxes and debt and culminate in a political revolution more astounding to the world at large than this last upheaval resulting in the abolition of slavery, negro suffrage and equal civil and political rights. Territorial expansion, then, means the success, and what is called masterly inactivity means the failure of Grant's administration.