

General Grant and the Cuban Question—

The Political Prospect for 1872.

Political affairs at Washington are at dead low water. The tide has never been so low there for half a century or more. For some time past the President, Vice President, Congress and the Cabinet, excepting Secretary Rawlins, and he is an invalid, have been out of town. To-day, however, there will be some signs of animation observable, occasioned by the Cabinet meeting; but as President Grant returns to Saratoga to-morrow, and as it is probable the heads of departments will follow suit, the capital is likely to resume its unprecedented dulness. Such a general clearing out of the government has never been known before this since the occupation of Washington by the British in 1814.

In all this, and especially in "the never ending but still beginning" pleasure excursions of General Grant, the democratic journals and politicians see the signs of an inglorious failure of Grant's administration and the breaking up and dispersion of the party in power. General Grant, we are told, is doing nothing on any of the great questions of the day, because he is alike ignorant and indifferent concerning them and the consequences—that on the Cuban question, for instance, he has no policy and no purpose but that of drifting along and trusting to luck. In regard to Cuba, however, we are entirely satisfied that General Grant's inactivity is not the result of indifference. We are satisfied that he is a close and earnest student of events, and that he is confident that before long Cuba will be free; that events in the island and in Spain are rapidly tending towards this solution, and that if the doubting Thomases will only yield to a little patience they too will in a short time be convinced. We are, in this connection, gratified with the assurance that the Secretary of State is not opposed to the recognition of belligerent rights in behalf of the Cubans, but is in full accord with the sympathies, expectations and purposes of the President, and that in due season all doubts and apprehensions will be scattered to the winds touching the policy of the administration on the Cuban question.

But what does all this signify? We presume it signifies that before long we shall have either a satisfactory treaty with Spain or the recognition of the revolutionary Cubans as a belligerent power. Meantime it is apparent from the enthusiastic receptions of General Grant by the people at every point where he appears before them that their confidence in him is unshaken; that they fully believe in his capacity and purpose to carry out the promises of his inaugural; that they care nothing for the growlings and whinings of disappointed place-hunters in the division of the spoils, and that on the Cuba question, the Alabama claims, the Mexican question, reconstruction, suffrage and the money question the people have full faith in General Grant, and that if he is doing nothing, if the government is standing still, it is because that just now there is really nothing to do but to wait for some further developments of events.

Hence it is still too soon to attempt the political horoscope for 1872, although, under the present appearances of things, General Grant must inevitably be nominated and elected for a second term. So far as he is concerned the opposition party in the South has disappeared, and both parties swear by his policy and his administration. In the North there is no agitation in the republican camp of the claims of any candidate in opposition to Grant, while to the Northern democracy the city of New York, and through the city, the State is all that is really left from the wreck of the Seymour and Blair campaign. Thus the democratic chiefs of this city, the Tammany Sachems—and more powerfully than the old Albany Regency—hold the democratic party of the Union subject to their control. Accordingly, they expect to name the democratic candidate for the succession; and if not their first choice their second choice will surely be the man. Their first choice is Hoffman, and their second choice may be Pendleton should the coming Ohio October election give him a fresh start in the West. Seymour is done for, Chase is apparently used up, and Hancock, Hendricks, Packer, Adams and the rest, appear to be all in the background in having no fixed power to bear upon Tammany Hall.

But what can Tammany Hall do under the present division of parties, North and South, against General Grant as the republican candidate in 1872? Absolutely nothing. The first thing Tammany is called upon to do is not to trot out Hoffman, but to bring about a reunion between the Northern and Southern democracy. To this end, if the mountain will not come to Mahomet Mahomet must go the mountain, or peradventure the democratic campaign of 1872 may be more profitless than that under Seymour and Blair, which hardly paid expenses.