

The President, Vice President and half the Cabinet are absent from Washington. The government, like a railway train in the absence of the conductor and engineer, is standing still. Yes, standing still and losing time which may never be regained under General Grant. The country is perplexed and disappointed, the outside world is incredulous; but still, while at home the impression is daily gaining strength that we have nothing to expect, the idea is beginning to prevail abroad that we have nothing to fear from General Grant's administration. Dry rot has seized upon the Cabinet, and the republican party is falling to pieces. The Secretary of the Treasury is doing something to stop the leaks and keep the ship afloat, and we see occasionally some spasmodic signs of life in the Navy Department and the War Office; but otherwise, like an abandoned hulk, the government appears to be drifting along, at the mercy of wind and wave.

Strange questions are beginning to be asked, such as these, concerning General Grant:— Is he a man of genius or a man of luck? Has he any of the qualities of a statesman, or is he simply a soldier? Has he any desire to make his administration famous in history, or is he satisfied with the honors he has achieved? Or is he afraid to move on the right hand or the left, or to push forward, for fear of making a mistake? Is it Grant or McClellan that is President? Can it be that the hero of Donelson, Shiloh, Vicksburg, Chattanooga, the Wilderness, Petersburg and the vigorous chase up to "the Appomattox apple tree," has become the head of an establishment of Quakers, from the State Department down to the Indian Bureau? Can it be that, too much impressed with the misfortunes of Andy Johnson in his efforts to maintain his own policy, General Grant has resolved to do nothing without express authority from Congress? Or is it possible that he does nothing because he knows not what to do? Are his designs so broad, deep and comprehensive that we cannot grasp them? or has he any clear perceptions of the duties, advantages, opportunities and responsibilities of his position?

We cannot answer these questions. So far the do-nothing policy of the administration answers them to the prejudice of General Grant. We had supposed that in rushing through the repulsive drudgery of the division of the public plunder he was anxious to get at the more important matters of business before him, touching our foreign and domestic affairs. It would appear, however, that he was desirous of getting this distasteful job of the spoils off his hands in order to have a longer enjoyment in the summer recreations of a Congressional recess; and that, come what may in the interval to December, he has made up his mind to let our domestic and foreign relations take care of themselves, so as to be free, at any inviting call, to go anywhere, and take his afternoon drive and smoke his evening cigar in peace. We cannot imagine that General Grant is still casting about for his policy. His inaugural leads us to a different conclusion. We believe that he has a policy matured—a broad, progressive and comprehensive American policy; but that he thinks the Treasury needs repose, and that he and the country, and England, Spain, Cuba and Mexico can wait till the reassembling of Congress in December.

In this view the executive branch of our government becomes a cipher. It was a department of recognized power in the worst days of Buchanan, and its strength even against a two-thirds vote in both houses of Congress, was still made manifest under Johnson. With a do-nothing President in 1861 the administration would have gone to destruction without a battle, and Jeff Davis would have taken the place of Lincoln; and so, with a do-nothing President in 1869, in the absence of Congress, the administration signifies nothing. Hence it is all the same whether the President and his Cabinet are in Washington, at West Point, Long Branch, or the Great Salt Lake. The chief clerks of the departments all the same can dispose of the routine business of posting the books. General Frank Blair has expressed the opinion several times that General Grant, if installed in the White House, would become a despot, and take good care to hold his place to the end of his life. One would suppose, however, that he is satisfied with one term of four short years, and means to enjoy it; that he intends to leave all responsibilities with Congress, and does not care a snap of his finger for his policy, his party, or for Cuba, the Alabama claims, Mexico, or the succession, or anything else. One would think that, in avoiding the troubles of Andy Johnson, he has resolved, in having a good time, to follow the example of Captain Tyler.

This, indeed, is a most lame and impotent conclusion, and will not do. The country demands something better of General Grant, and the time demands it. His opportunities for great things, looking to the extension of the borders of the republic and of its name and weight and power among the nations, admit of no trifling. The crisis demands business before pleasure; and the people, in view of the glorious results promised, expect their President, upon several great questions, to assume the responsibility of decisive action. It is not becoming to the United States any longer to play the petty part in the world's affairs of a German principality or of Mexico. If General Grant's Cabinet is unequal to the occasion, let him change it. Congress has given him the authority. Nor is it wise to do nothing for fear of a blunder. Under this rule General Grant's fine army of the Potomac would have perished while waiting on the Rapidan for some precise information of the strength and position of Lee. The excessive amiability of Louis XVI. cost him his crown and his life; the boldness of Napoleon gave him the empire.

To come nearer home—we must have a touch of General Jackson from General Grant, or we shall have the collapse of Van Buren. A do-nothing policy will bring upon this administration the derision of England, the mockery of France, the disappointment of our neighbors, the scorn of our enemies and the contempt of the American people. In brief, until General Grant shall have shown that he realizes the fact that he has duties to perform which will not admit of evasion or delay his administration will be a failure. At this day to stand still on his part is to go down.