

comes in to disturb and impede the natural and healthful flow of human affairs.

Nor can it be disguised that a band of secret societies, extending over the whole country, in correspondence and concert with each other, and marshalled under a central organization, are capable of being wielded with immense efficiency for sinister purposes, many of being converted into engines for subverting the liberties of the people. Masonry, at one time, was first growing to a gigantic strength, and was threatened to overtop all other influences, and rule the nation. Association is always an element of power, and in proportion to its closeness and extent.

However open and public it may be, in its strength, and, if it overtops a country, it will often control and revolutionize it, as is shown by the history of the Jacobin clubs of France, and of the political parties in this country. Conducted in the most open manner, associations sometimes wield their mighty power for the worst purposes. Fortified by secrecy, they are the strongest antitype to their evil tendencies. Their only sin lies in the full publicity and thorough discussion of all their transactions.

We conclude, therefore, that these evils and evil tendencies are inherent in the very nature of secret societies; that they are not to be eradicated by any means, and to show very clearly that they ought not to receive the favor and support of Christian people.

It is indeed alleged that they nourish a spirit of benevolence among their members; that they provide essential relief to their families when afflicted; and that some of them do much to secure good morals generally among their members. This is plausible. But in answer to it we observe:

1. Their chief reliance for promoting benevolence and good morals generally, must be the gospel and grace of God. Turn from this living root, this evangelical basis, all experience shows that sound morality will wither and decay. All other methods are empirical and delusive. The bad tree cannot bear good fruit, and every plant which our heavenly Father has not planted shall wither of its own prop. It is indeed alleged that they mean to make men better, we may expect success in proportion as we forsake them to do much to secure good morals generally among their members. This is plausible. But in answer to it we observe:

2. Even admitting all that is claimed in this respect, it is no compensation for the manifold evils and dangers which have been shown to inhere in the very nature of secret societies.

3. The species of benevolence and charity thus fostered, is defective, because it is too narrow and exclusive. It may render man benevolent to those who are connected with them, but they are attached by secret bonds and mystic symbols; but does it make them generally benevolent, and lead them "to do good unto all men as they have opportunity," universally, to do unto others as they would that they should do unto us? Says Christ, "If ye love them that love you, what thank have ye? do not even the publicans and sinners the same?" Who is merciful or charitable only when he is mysterious sign, he is assured that the sufferer is a member of his society, or if the will or child of another of the British Government. We do not deny that many members of these societies may have a more enlarged benevolence, or that they may be bright examples of this virtue on its broadest scale. What we claim is, that the sort of benevolence fostered by them is of a narrower character.

OREGON.

Important Correspondence.

In compliance with the several Resolutions, requesting the President to lay before Congress the prevailing intelligence between the Philipposites of the United States and Great Britain, in relation to the Oregon Territory, the President, on Saturday last, transmitted to the House of Representatives, a message communicating the following correspondence, which, in consequence of its importance, we give to our readers in full, to the exclusion of other less interesting matter:

MR. BUCHANAN TO MR. MCCLANE,
DEPARTMENT OF STATE,
WASHINGTON, December 13, 1845.

The President has received information from a variety of sources, which he cannot disregard, that Great Britain is now making extensive warlike preparations. Her relations with all the Powers of Europe seem at present to be of a peaceful character. I think it probable, therefore, that these preparations look to a rupture with the United States on the Oregon question. It is of vast importance that this country should be prepared to meet any emergency which may arise, and to ascertain their true character. You are therefore instructed to embrace the first opportunity of bringing this subject to the notice of the War Department, and to report to me as you may deem expedient.

The President is also anxious to learn your own opinion upon this subject with the least practicable delay.

MR. MCCLANE TO MR. BUCHANAN,
LONDON, JANUARY 3, 1846.

I received on the 20th of December your letter of the 13th inst., and on the day following I sought an interview with Lord Aberdeen, in order that, in conformity with your instructions, I might lay before him the whole of the division of the territory to the arbitration of some friendly sovereign or State.

His Majesty's Government deeply regret the failure of all other expedients, and friendly settlement of the conflicting claims by direct negotiation between the two Governments.

They are still persuaded that great advantage would have resulted to both parties from such a mode of settlement, had it been practicable, but there are difficulties now in the way in that course of proceeding which it might be tedious to retrace, while the importance of an early settlement seems to become at each moment more urgent.

Under these circumstances, Her Majesty's Government think that a resort to arbitration is the most prudent, and, perhaps, the only feasible step which could be taken, and which would be likely to result in a permanent and lasting settlement of the Oregon question.

Lord Aberdeen said very promptly and frankly that it would be improper to disguise to you the sincere desire to avoid any possibility of rupture with the United States; and that in such a crisis the warlike preparations now making would be useful and important; but he stated at the same time, in the most candid manner, that they were in the same way and to the same extent, without regard to the relations of Great Britain and the United States.

He also adverted to the fact that such preparations as were actually making had been commenced before the relations between the United States and Great Britain had become so serious as they now appeared to be, and therefore could not at that time have had any connexion with difficulties which had since grown out of the Oregon question.

There is nothing in it, they are convinced, not perfectly compatible with the strictest regard for the honor and just interest of both parties, particularly when it is considered of what small value to either is the portion of the territory which in reality forms the subject of controversy compared with the importance of preserving a state of peace and good will between two such nations.

Under the same conviction, he cannot consent to jeopard for his country. All the efforts to which it may be exposed by arbitration, perhaps, more agreeable to the government of the U. States.

There might be, for instance, a mixed difficulty, in which the interests of both countries would be equal, or nearly equal, value to the two powers. Wholly it is invaluable to the United States, it is of infinitely small value to Great Britain.

The undersigned is perfectly aware that such considerations can have no bearing upon the question of the title of either party. They are presented solely for the purpose of explaining the views of the President in his refusal to adopt any measure which would involve in new difficulties the Government of the U. States to be most just, and, especially, in the case of a rupture between the two nations.

The undersigned avails himself of this opportunity to renew to the Hon. James Buchanan the assurance of his high consideration.

MR. PAKENHAM TO MR. BUCHANAN,
WASHINGTON, JANUARY 6, 1846.

The undersigned, Her Majesty's Envoy Extraordinary and Minister Plenipotentiary, has had the honor to receive the note of the Secretary of State of the United States, dated the 3d inst., in relation to the Oregon question, dated the 27th inst., containing a proposal for referring the question of an equitable partition of the Oregon Territory to the arbitration of some friendly sovereign or State.

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