

WASHINGTON CITY.

SATURDAY EVENING, SEPT. 26, 1857.

BANK SUSPENSIONS IN PHILADELPHIA, BALTIMORE, AND WASHINGTON.

By referring to the telegraphic column it will be observed that the banks of Philadelphia have partially, and in some instances wholly, suspended specie payments. As a matter of precaution—it is so alleged—the banks of Baltimore suspended specie payments to-day; and from the same cause a similar course was adopted this morning by the Patriotic Bank and the Bank of Washington of this city. It may reasonably be expected that a large number of new and irresponsible banks in the North, East, and West, taking advantage of the general panic, will nominally refuse to part with what they really do not possess. The sooner these worthless institutions are out of the way the better it will be for all classes of the community.

As a general rule, the southern banks are in a sound condition; and, with large and increasing resources at command, they will be able, with few, if any, exceptions, to weather the present storm with undiminished credit. The condition of the banks in the city of New York is such as to warrant the belief that their resources are fully equal to meet existing emergencies. Their strength will force the suspending banks into liquidation or the speedy resumption of specie payments.

Looking at home, we can see nothing in the financial affairs of this city to warrant alarm or distrust. Our citizens are not suffering from the effects of over-trading or over-speculating; and the cash means of our banks are not locked up in protested paper or the depreciated bonds and stocks of "fancy" railroads. At no period in the history of our city was the condition of our merchants, hotel keepers, mechanics, traders, and real-estate owners more prosperous and promising than it is at the present time. Never before were clerks, journeymen, and laborers as liberally and promptly paid as now; and we venture to say that the balance-sheets of our banks show as large net profits for the past year as for any previous year of their existence. Compared with Baltimore, Philadelphia, New York, Boston, Cincinnati, or any other northern, eastern, or western city, the financial condition of Washington should be a source of congratulation instead of a cause for alarm.

But still, with all our substantial means at command, with general freedom from debt and general well-paid employment, we are free to confess that a money panic and a money crisis can be soon got up in the federal capital, if our citizens desire such an expensive luxury. Let each distrust the other—let the usual money accommodations be withheld—and let all engage in the confidence-imparting business of withdrawing specie from the banks and the ordinary channels of trade for "hoarding" purposes, and not many days or even hours will elapse before the business men of Washington are suffering as their brethren of New York and Philadelphia now suffer.

Let the citizens of Washington have a true, realizing sense of their really prosperous condition, and the troubles which they invoke by their fears and distrust will not come near them.

AN APPEAL.

We publish below a letter from Mrs. Mayor Magruder, addressed to her countrywomen, proposing to them that meetings be held in every village, town, and city in the country, to raise funds to be invested for the use and benefit of the now destitute widow and daughter of the late Commodore Herndon. The suggestion is worthy of the heart of every generous, grateful, sympathizing woman. And it is every way fitting, that the wife of the chief magistrate of the metropolitan city should take the initiative in this appropriate and generous purpose. Let the meetings be held! And let the noble women of our great country respond to the call, which the bereaved and the helpless make through one of their own sex, upon their sympathy and succor. We cannot doubt that this benevolent appeal will be successfully carried out; and that the wife and child of him, whose last effort was for the safety of the wives and children of others, will be saved from the crushing ills of penury and dependence.

WASHINGTON, Sept. 22, 1857.

The undersigned has read with the most painful emotions of the loss of the steamer Central America, and sincerely deploring the sad fate of her passengers, suddenly cut off, "in health and hope," by one of those fearful hurricanes which in the past few years have made so many hearts desolate, and so many hearts to mourn.

But, mid the gloom and horror of that dreadful night, there is one gleam of glorious light—one gallant, noble, chivalrous action that will stand out in bold relief, and raise for its author a monument as enduring as time, indestructible as mind; its base resting in the hearts of women, and its apex as elevated as her hopes. "Save the women and children" was the first order of the noble Herndon; and shall American women forget the gallant, the noble captain who, mid storm, gloom, and desolation, forgetful of himself, could think of poor, frail women and helpless children? Never! No, never!

I propose to my countrywomen that a meeting be called in each city and village in the United States, and that funds be collected, and transmitted to George W. Riggs, banker in Washington, to be invested for the use of the wife and daughter of Capt. Herndon, late of the United States navy. Let us do something to show our gratitude to one who in time of trouble sacrificed himself to his duty and to woman.

Your countrywoman, SARAH MAGRUDER.

To the Wives of the United States.

SENIATOR TOMBS.

The Macon (Georgia) Telegraph says:

"He has girdled on his armor and his white plume is seen glittering where dangers are the thickest. The opposition cover before the deadly blows of his stalwart arm, and armed as he is with the weapons of truth, his march is like that of an 'array with banners.'"

"Mr. Tombs is no laggard in the cause of democracy, but ever ready to respond to any call his friends may make upon him. Verily, he will not be forgotten!"

The same paper has the following complimentary notice of Senator Bigler, of Pennsylvania:

"We regret very much that we have not space to publish the very able and patriotic speech of Senator Bigler, of Pennsylvania, delivered at Clarion, in that State, on the 8th ult. in reply to the address of the Hon. David Wilmot, at Philadelphia, on the 24th ult. We have long known Mr. Bigler to be one of the brightest intellects in the republic, and a careful perusal of this masterly effort of his in behalf of the rights of the South and her constitutional guarantees proves that he possesses, in an eminent degree, that catholic spirit of enlarged liberality which is so absolutely necessary to the faithful performance of the arduous and responsible duties of an American senator."

The beautiful estate of the late Andrew Stevenson, near Charlottesville, Virginia, has been purchased by Aristides Welsh, esq., for the sum of \$21,000. Benham is said to be one of the most desirable estates in the Old Dominion.

THE CHARLESTON MERCURY.

Our historical accuracy, in alluding to occurrences in the House of Representatives in 1836, is questioned by the Mercury because we stated that two members from South Carolina failed to vote on the deposit question, when it seems that five did not vote. Both her senators voted for it, as did Grayson and Griffin, while her Pinckney and Rogers also voted against it. The Mercury refers to this deposit act to sustain its assumption that distribution was made by a democratic Congress, while it knows full well that it was not intended as such, and that a large share of those voting for it, including Mr. Calhoun, were decidedly opposed to distribution. Does the Mercury mean it shall be understood that Mr. Calhoun was not a democrat? When a distribution act was up in 1841, he and the democracy sternly opposed it; and it was to this act we referred, as did the Mercury we suppose when speaking of the political character of the Congress which passed it, which was strongly whig.

In reply to the allegation of the Mercury, that our firm adherence to our national Union rests upon selfish considerations, we will merely say it knows that at all times and in all places we have ever stood upon our present ground. We should be glad to see that paper engaged in so patriotic a cause, based upon any motives.

The Mercury says: "But if it (we) really desires to perpetuate the Union, let it labor to keep the democratic party true to its principles. (1.) Let it urge justice for the South in Kansas. (2.) Let it oppose taxes laid for protection, and insist that they shall be laid for revenue only. (3.) Let it oppose appropriations for internal improvement. (4.) Let it urge economy in the administration. (5.)—which from twenty-five millions under Mr. Van Buren's and twenty-seven millions under Mr. Polk's administration has increased to seventy millions of dollars." (6.)

We reply briefly to these several matters separately:

1. We do labor, and continually, to keep the democratic party true to its principles, as the only sure way of preserving the Union. Opposition to the democracy like that of the Mercury leads to disunion. If that and other similar papers will go with us in opposition to political fanaticism wherever found, the Union will be safe.

2. We have urged justice to the South as well as to the whole Union in Kansas. We have fought for the principle of self-government there, as contained in the organic act, as the most certain mode of doing justice to all, and we have dealt as heavy blows as any journal upon the treasonable agitators who seek to create sectional difficulties hazarding the safety of the Union.

3. The Mercury ought to know that we have uniformly opposed levying taxes merely for protection, and have always insisted that they should be imposed for revenue.

4. It ought also to know that we have ever opposed the internal-improvement system, and that we have stood by the vetoes upon that subject.

5. We shall go as far as the farthest in urging economy in all branches of the public service. Economy in public expenditures is one of the cardinal principles of the democratic party.

6. The Mercury must pardon us if we again attempt to point out some of its inaccuracies. In stating the expenditures under Mr. Van Buren at twenty-five, and under Mr. Polk at twenty-seven millions, and now (under Mr. Pierce) at seventy millions, it has fallen into grave errors, as the following table will show:

Table with columns: Years, Gross expenditures, Expenditures on account of public debt. Rows for Van Buren (1837-1840) and Polk (1845-1848).

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It will be seen that, exclusive of the public debt, and the average expenses under Mr. Van Buren were \$30,437,987 74, and under Mr. Polk \$41,345,256 56, and that his last year they were about forty instead of twenty-seven millions; and that the average of expenses, excluding the public debt, under the late administration, was \$38,108,718 23. It should be borne in mind that our territory had greatly increased in size, naturally adding to its business. Our army and navy have been greatly enlarged, and our mail establishment has been to the amount of millions, quartered upon the treasury. Our increase of territory and extending settlements have involved us in Indian wars and occasioned many new expenses, besides that of purchasing millions of acres of another government. While these things account for increased expenditures, we shall raise our voice in favor of reducing the public expenses to the lowest point consistent with the public welfare. We are sure that the democratic party will go with us upon this subject. We trust the Mercury will now be satisfied that we are pursuing the right course to secure the perpetuity of the Union.

An "old subscriber" to the New York Journal of Commerce writes the following note to the editors of that paper:

"Although my vote was cast in opposition to President Buchanan, the dignity and purity of our Chief Magistrate as shown thus far in his administration, and especially in that able and excellent reply to Professor Silliman and others, cannot fail to win the esteem and support of law-abiding, conservative, Christian men."

DEPARTMENT NEWS.

ATTORNEY GENERAL'S OFFICE.

Opinion of the Attorney General—Compensation of Foreign Ministers and Consuls.—Subjoined is the able opinion of the Attorney General construing the recent law regulating the compensation of foreign ministers and consuls:

ATTORNEY GENERAL'S OFFICE, September 21, 1857.

SIR: You have propounded to me certain questions relative to the compensation of consuls, to which I now reply.

Previous to 1855 the services of nearly all our consuls abroad were paid by fees. The act then proposed abolished the right of consuls to receive fees (so far as to keep them) and fixed after the 30th of June of that year the compensation of consuls, to which I now reply.

The act of 1855 was singularly obscure in its phrasing. It declared that from and after the 30th of June the President may, and with the advice and consent of the Senate, make such regulations as he may think proper, and subject to the approval of the Senate, to provide for the compensation of consuls at certain places, and consuls at certain places, who shall receive an annual compensation for their services, not exceeding the amount herein specified. A very strict and liberal construction of this act would give the salaries provided for it to nobody who was not appointed from and after the 30th of June, 1855, while at the same time it would have taken away from all the then incumbents the right to receive their fees, or, indeed, to hold their offices. But it could not be believed that Congress meant to vacate all our legations and all our consulates on one day, and keep them vacant until new appointments could be sent out to every part of the world. The construction put on the act by the late President and Secretary of State, under the advice of the Attorney General, was that a minister or consul who was in office, on the 30th of June, and who was retained in office, was to all the intents and purposes of the new act, in the same condition as if he had received his commission afterwards. In other words, the law converted the incumbents from full-paid into salaried officers.

That the construction was right I had no doubt. It is in accordance with the grand purpose of the act, and any other view of it would have defeated the object and done enormous injury to the public service.

The compensation of the Executive is high authority for it, and Congress added the weight of its own by making appropriations to pay ministers who were not previously appointed and not recommissioned, as well as by ratifying the treaties which they subsequently negotiated.

It is one step towards a conclusion. It is settled that a consul retained in office under the act of 1855 is a consul appointed under that act so far as regards compensation. That compensation was a salary, to be counted from that time, when he received his post of duty, down to the time when he left it. To give him more would be expressly forbidden.

But, after 1856 the system was again remodelled. By the eighth section of the act then proposed a consul was to receive salary not only for the time spent at the place of his official duty, but, in addition to that, for the time occupied in waiting his instructions, in travelling to his post of duty, and in returning home at the close of his post.

This last-mentioned act, like the one which preceded it, did not in words apply to consuls or ministers who had been appointed before; but, inasmuch as it was not contemplated to turn them out, it must have been meant that they should remain in office with the new compensation. About this, however, there seems to have been some doubt, which was probably put at rest in 1857 by a proviso in the appropriation act, which provided that the act of 1856 should apply to consuls appointed after the act of 1855.

Thus the consuls appointed in 1856 are put on a level with those appointed in 1855, and we have seen that consuls whose commissions were dated previous to 1855 could not, when they were retained in office, be appointed under that act. Things thus are equal to the consuls who are equal to each other. Therefore there is no difference between the three classes so far as regards the rule of compensation for services performed at the same time.

The result of all this legislation—which certainly does not seem at the first blush to be very plain—is that a consul who served only under the old law received fees, and nothing else. If he was retained in office after July 1, he got a salary for the time he remained at his post. If he held his office after the act of 1856 went into operation, he got paid, in addition, for the time spent in coming home. In short, his compensation is to be regulated by the law which was in force when the services were performed. There is no ground whatever for the notion that a consul can claim a salary for any portion of the time for which he was authorized to get fees, and just as little for the opinion that he can be paid under the law of 1856 for anything he did under that of 1855. A consul, for instance, who was appointed in March, 1855, and went immediately to his post, received fees down to July 1st of that year, and cannot claim anything else. If you give him the salary created in 1856 for the time spent in making his journey out, you must give it to him on the same principle for the whole time he was there, and let him have fees and salary both. But such a claim would be so absurd that nobody makes it. It all comes down to what I have already said—the true rule is, namely, that each person shall be paid for his services agreeably to the law in force at the time when the services were performed; and there is nothing in the book that can make it either more or less.

It may be well that I should not close without applying the rule to the particular cases which you have sent to me.

Mr. McCrea, late consul at Paris, claims for time spent in returning home. He is entitled to it, because his return was long after the act of 1855 went into effect, and his resignation was not for malfeasance in office.

Mr. Mathew, the late consul at Shanghai, is in the same condition, if I rightly understand the statement of his case as I received it.

Mr. Epping, consul at Oldenburg, was appointed in January, 1856. His claim for salary while waiting for instructions and going out cannot be allowed for two reasons: 1st. He went out while the law of 1855 was in operation, and that law forbade such allowance; and, 2d, the act of 1856 took away all salary from the consuls at Oldenburg, so that, if it were retroactive, its effect would be, not to give him more than he received under the act of 1855, but to make him refund what he has already got.

Mr. Blythe, consul general for Cuba, received his instructions in March, 1856, and went to Cuba in October, 1856. He cannot be paid for that time, because the act of 1856 did not go into effect until January, 1857.

Mr. Andrews, late consul general for the British North American provinces, received his instructions in March and April, 1855, when the duties of the office were paid by fees. Of course he is not to be allowed anything by the act of 1856.

Mr. Huffnagle's instructions as consul-general to British India were given him in September, 1855. He claims compensation for the time he was occupied in receiving them and in making the passage to Calcutta. But it must be allowed; for the act of 1855, then in force, gave no salary, except for the time spent at the post of duty.

I am, most respectfully, yours, &c.

J. S. BLACK, Secretary of State.

Hon. LAWIS CASE, Secretary of State.

INDIAN AFFAIRS.

THE ACTING COMMISSIONER OF INDIAN AFFAIRS.

Indian Affairs transmitted this morning to the Commissioner of the General Land Office all the papers in his possession relating to the lands in Kansas held by the government in trust for the Indians. Large sales of these lands have recently been made, and the possession of these papers will enable the Commissioner of the General Land Office to issue patents to the purchasers.

POST OFFICE DEPARTMENT.

Promotion.—We learn that Mr. James K. Polk Campbell, of Tennessee, has been promoted from a second class to a third-class clerkship in the Post Office Department, in place of Mr. Meriam, resigned. Salary, \$1,600 a year.

THE NEW YORK BLACK-REPUBLICAN STATE TICKET.

The Albany Argus, in its issue of yesterday morning, has the following "first-rate notice" of the ticket just placed in nomination by the black-republican State convention of New York:

"Nothing shows the weakness of the black-republican party as an organization so much as the State ticket that has been selected to it, and which is presented to the country. The nominations were extorted by the candidates under threats and denunciations."

"Mr. Clapp, the nominee for secretary of State, denounced the corruptions of his party, openly espoused the leading principles of the know-nothings, and manifested an insubordination that was only to be appraised by the gift of office."

"The so-called moral democrat central party, denounced the corruptions of the central power, and threatened an insurrection, unless also appeased by office. They receive two places—that of comptroller, and that of canal commissioner. Mr. Hogeboom, who was identified with the vetoed anti-bill, and other members of the last session, now generally condemned, demanded one of the first places on the programme. Defeated by a shuffle of the cards, his friends denounced the manoeuvring of the convention, and they were appeased by the gift of the treasuryship."

"The patch-work coalition was falling apart into its several elements of fanaticism, and each of the demagogic leaders was preparing to march off with his faction, when the device of giving an office to each was hit upon as a temporary expedient."

"Thus the party is officered by the insubordinate and disloyal men who have denounced its conduct, and declared their want of confidence in its principles."

THE ARGUS CONCLUDES:

"A ticket thus made can have no strength. It does not come from the ranks. The nominations were obtained by threats, and not from the fears of the convention. There can be no enthusiasm in their behalf, and no desire to see this extortion successful; nor has the party anything to expect of an administration (if elected) composed of such warring elements."

"We have no fears of such a ticket. If elected it will be owing to the agency and not to the talents of its opponents, and not to any inherent strength of its own."

THE FEELING IN PENNSYLVANIA.

We take the following from the Perry (Pennsylvania) Democrat:

"Wherever Gen. Packer has addressed a democratic meeting the people have turned out in great numbers to greet him, and manifested the liveliest enthusiasm. On the contrary, wherever Mr. Willmet has appeared the meetings were dull, and the turn-out remarkably small. At Hollidaysburg, Huntingdon, and Chambersburg, recently, his meetings were but failures. Who do these signs betoken? Do they not plainly point out that Gen. Packer is to be our next governor, and that the people are heartily sick of this everlasting slavery agitation, and desire to give the men who are at the head of it a merited rebuke? Pennsylvania is too loyal to the constitution to place in their gubernatorial chair a black-republican agitator."

The Philadelphia Argus says:

"Willnot appears to be making poor headway in the west. His abolition harangue does not please the people, and he is not so successful in his efforts to create a difference between him and his opponents. He was announced for Clearfield and several other places, which he has failed to meet, having evidently become sick and disheartened with his prospects."

THE UNITED STATES GRAND LODGE OF ODD FELLOWS.

This body is now in session in the city of Baltimore, and we learn that it is rapidly progressing with the business before it. The Sun of yesterday morning says:

"Among the important business of Wednesday was the presentation of the report of the grand treasurer, Hon. Joshua Vansant, stating a balance, as per report of the finance committee, of \$10,339 52; received from the grand secretary for the year up to September 1st, 1857, \$17,604 60; note of the U. S. Grand Lodge, at three months, for \$1,500; do do, at four months, \$1,200; \$224 19 for books, \$33 75 for diplomas, \$22 50 for diplomas, \$1,044 50; note of Grand Lodge of Maine, \$121 15; note of Grand Encampment of Maine, \$116—making a total of \$31,826 79; from which is deducted for mileage, per diem, current expenses, salaries, &c., \$21,413 55. Of the balance there are drafts which will not be payable until the adjournment of the Grand Lodge, amounting to \$1,424 78, and leaving a cash balance in the treasury of \$8,988 45. The report estimates that \$11,000 will be required to pay the per diem and mileage of the representatives, and that \$2,011 55 will be required more than is now in the treasury for that purpose. It further estimates that a balance of \$4,000 will stand against the treasury on the 1st of December next. The report exhibits a balance of \$173 72 greater than that of last year."

"The committee on finance, in its report, spoke of the necessity of reducing the expense of the Grand Lodge, either by a reduction of mileage, per diem, a resort to bimonthly sessions, or limit the number of representatives to one from each subordinate Grand Lodge."

"The grand secretary made a supplementary report of the amounts received by him since the former report up to the 22d instant to be \$607 36, of which \$672 were balances from Grand Lodges, \$1,465 31 for diplomas, \$224 19 for books, \$33 75 for diplomas, \$22 50 for diplomas, \$34 01 for miscellaneous, and \$1,200 representation taxes from Grand Encampment balances \$134 29, charter \$60, dues \$92 45, and miscellaneous \$320 62."

The Paris correspondent of the New Orleans Picayune thus writes: "That the French people are generally happy and contented appears to be beyond dispute. I have conversed with a number of old residents and others well informed, and their unanimous expressions were that the nation under Napoleon III was universally prosperous, peaceful, and contented. No man could have administered more faithfully to their wants than he had done, while the city of Paris, as well as the empire, had undergone the most beneficial changes during his reign. With regard to Paris alone, it had become almost another city within the past few years, and those who had not visited it lately would scarcely recognize the Paris of a short time back. New, beautiful, and substantial edifices, even in the outskirts of the city, are daily going up, while the arts and sciences are encouraged with all that a devoted Emperor's liberality can bestow. To sum up, I have never witnessed a better-governed city than Paris. The rights of all are respected; the city is a model of order and cleanliness; good health and contentment prevail; and if the shopkeepers would only respect the Sabbath, Paris would be the city of the world! As it is, for solid comfort and pleasure combined, she is without an equal. London may be ahead of her in a business point of view, but in all other respects Paris bears away the palm."

The St. Louis Democrat says: "It seems that the revenues of our noble State will never cease developing. Something new is found or wonderful is constantly turning up. The latest discovery is a specimen of salt rock, handed us yesterday by Mr. Nettleton, clerk of the State Geology. It was taken from a hill or mountain of the same material, just discovered, a short distance from the Mississippi river, on the Missouri side, and about seventy-two miles from St. Louis. It is situated on Saline creek, in Perry county, and almost on a line dividing that county from Ste. Genevieve county. Saline creek empties into the Mississippi river about three and a half miles below St. Mary's landing. The specimen before us resembles a piece of quartz rock, and is a little mixed with a substance resembling iron ore. It has a pure, sweet taste, and when ground to powder is as white as any of the table salt now in general use. If we are not misinformed, this hill of salt will prove an immense speculation to its owners, and will cheapen the price of that article very materially in this city."

INDIA AND CHINA.

For the Union.

The popular mind is notoriously impatient. The impressions made upon it are as short-lived as they are sudden in growth. Their existence is wholly a dependent one; for they last as long as no grave issues of national importance, no sudden outburst of political or religious passion, no Bardell trial, or Kallash farce; no racy bones of European scandal, or stupefying evidence of diplomatic guile, rises up to push them from their stools. On the great throne of public curiosity there can be no Lacedaemonian rule of dominion. Two monarchs cannot reign simultaneously. One must be content to withdraw from the imperial award, and bend in submission to the other. The less recent is always the weaker, and whatever importance it might have before possessed becomes lost in the astounding character of the *novum-nud*. Its duty is at an end, and there is no longer occasion for a continuance in office. It must be observed, however, that all such "sensations" have not necessarily the same end. This varies with the relative value of each. There is a certain price to be paid to the remains of a few superior "sensations" after the throne which they once occupied has been usurped by a new comer. A special manifestation of recognition is due to their memory. They are not thrown into the grave of the undistinguished many; but are embalmed in high state by their friends, who indulge in the pleasing ho of Micawber that something will "turn up" to make them once more the centre of public attraction. Their importance for the time being has passed away; but that does not preclude the likelihood of their possessing a prospective utility. Regarded in the light of a *last resort*, they remain unnoticed until their rivals have ceased to attract, or there is nothing current to satisfy the voracious maws of the news-devourers. When this takes place, such an "item" again comes forth clothed in all its primitive attractiveness. Its reception by the fickle public is the same as it was on its "first appearance." The excitement rises as high; the press is flooded with the wise productions usual on such occasions, and absolutely groans with gloomy forebodings as to its probable effect upon the "stocks" or the "money market;" and all do their best to forget that the startling news is nothing else but a resurrected corpse galvanized into existence by themselves.

There cannot be a more apt illustration of the above views than the contrast between the interest in China shown by our people and the press generally six months ago, and the utter listlessness with which the movements of the English at Canton are now received. This difference seems the more astonishing when we reflect that the cases which then attracted the attention of the people of this country still exist, and that matters are now assuming a most critical aspect. If we scrutinized them, we should watch with an eagle eye at present. If we were interested then, we should be anxious now. The contest is still as noble and as important to the interests of this country. England's course should commend itself to every one engaged in the advancement of commerce, unweakened by prejudice and unfettered by exclusiveness. The advantages that she, as is to be hoped, will derive from China will not be confined to her merchants and people; but they will be made available wherever commerce is king, and a necessity exists for a full opening to be given to the principles of "free trade."

Now, however, that the question has assumed a decisive aspect, that a British minister backed by a British force has taken to China, and that battles have actually taken place between them and the Chinese which display the skill and courage of the latter in a much better light than we have been led to expect, why do we remain listless and careless spectators of the result of the struggle? Why is this? The question is surely as interesting and important as it was in April last. The interest has, if possible, become more intensified. A decided stand has been taken by Great Britain. Our government has also taken active measures, with an eye to the future protection of our interests in the Chinese ports. It is well recollected that, when the question of holding the court of Peking responsible for the aggressions of its officers upon British subjects and American citizens at Canton was before this government and that of Great Britain, the greatest excitement prevailed in this country, and whatever related, however indirectly, to the "Celestial Kingdom" became full of attraction. Mr. Buchanan did not consider the provocation a sufficient *casus belli*, as a qualification was offered by the authorities which he deemed sufficient. He contented himself, therefore, with sending a commissioner to China clothed with authority to make inquiries into the true state of the facts, and to co-operate, if necessary, with Lord Elgin, who was invested by the British government with ample powers to declare war, in the event of indemnification for the loss sustained by British subjects being refused by the Emperor. An actual expression has been given to the declared wishes of the people of the United States. What they desired has been accomplished. Their wishes have been carried out; and yet the compliance with them seems to have hitherto passed unheeded.

What, it may be asked, has produced this complete revulsion of popular sentiment? Why does China no longer occupy a prominent place in the public eye? There must be a cause, or a combination of causes, which have produced this apathy on our part not less strange than it is blameworthy. It might be justly thought that these are of the most powerful character. "No, faith, not a jot." The unsteadiness in popular feeling alone underlies this change in sentiment. The capricious public is amusing itself with another toy, and has little leisure to look at that which it has carelessly tossed aside. The idol of yesterday has become the cast-away bauble of to-day. Our eyes are still directed to Asia; but they pass over China to rest upon British India. We talk proudly of the *Maharajah*, and have forgotten what little we knew about the *Tu-Ting-Luh-Si*. The "Offspring of the Sun" is wholly eclipsed by the traditional King of Delhi, whose venerable beard and dignified countenance have been delineated—no doubt admirably—in a certain well-known "weekly." Buddhists and Mandarins are neglected, while high-seigns and followers of Brahma form the staple of deeply-philosophic inquiries.

It is evident that we no longer view with any manifestations of interest the progress of events in China. The glance at the news from that empire is a cursory one, while the smallest slip from India is read with the utmost avidity. Though our anxiety is natural, and proceeds mainly from sentiments of humanity, it is not the less to be censured if it blinds us to what touches so closely our interests and those of the great world of commerce. A watchful guardianship over our interests does not imply necessarily the exercise of selfishness. To protect carefully from injury all that may serve to benefit us cannot surely be characterized as such. It is but the exercise of a strict national prudence. It manifests a proper regard for our dignity as a nation, which demands the preservation of these elements, which make us prosperous and great.

What sentiment, other than that of sympathy, identifies us with the maintenance of British dominion in India? If the power of the British government be re-established, it will confer no more benefits on us than it has heretofore done. The same selfish monopolies will be exercised, and the same undue privileges claimed, by the colonial authorities. If, on the other hand, the prophecy treasured up so reverently among the Hindoos meet its fulfillment, and the century after the battle of Plassey see the strength of English dominion exhausted, and the English troops driven from the soil, it is more than probable that the advantages accruing to this country from the increase of commercial facilities so afforded would enable us to bear with equanimity the destruction of the power of the East India Company. Has that influence produced any useful results for us as a nation? England has civilized India, but it has ever been a civilization working for her own benefit, and revolving within an orbit prescribed by herself. She has rendered the productions and manufactures of the natives useful, but she has, with the cunning that is so distinctive a feature of her policy, contrived to narrow their usefulness to her own interests. England has been kind to

India, but she has been kinder to herself. She has almost wholly monopolized the trade of her colonies, and what other nations have been able to gather from it has been usually at a heavy disadvantage. Much of this, no doubt, is to be ascribed to the many restrictions which she has deemed it politic to impose upon foreign trade. And this will most probably always continue. While India labors and produces for the benefit of her taskmaster, it is foolish to suppose that either we or any other people can hope to occupy a position other than subordinate to that of her conquerors. But a different system would be inaugurated should the present rebellion against her authority be successful. We trust that it may not; but it cannot be concealed that, though India would be lost to England, we would, in all probability, be gainers by the change. The field, which would then be open for competition, American enterprise, untrammelled by the policy of a rival retaining in her hands a powerful monopoly, could then press forward in its race of progress. The *misfortune of England would be the gain of the United States*.

On the other hand, her struggle with China appeals forcibly to our interests as a commercial nation. We have a legitimate right to participate in whatever triumphs may fall to her lot. We would be losers by her defeat; while we could not fail to profit by her success. To a commercial people like ours, a free and open trade with that mysterious empire, about the true capacity of which so little accurate is known, would be of the utmost importance. Our comparative ignorance of the extent of the resources of China renders it impossible to judge, by any just standard of measurement, how far an unfettered interchange of goods would increase our trade in her peculiar manufactures. We cannot give a correct opinion when we know so little that is positive. Our want of knowledge becomes a bar to such an expression of judgment. That it would be great cannot, however, be doubted. It can be fairly assumed, we take it, that an opening of the interior of China would not only result in a large increase in the demand for tea, and silk, raw and manufactured, but that it would also be likely to make our own products known to the Chinese. A certainty of protection from the extortions and opposition of the Chinese government would, no doubt, operate favorably upon commerce, both in discovering new articles of trade and in lowering their prices by incessant, vigorous competition.

By reference to the American Almanac for 1857 it appears that our trade with China is double that with the British East Indies. During the year ending June 30, 1855, the value of our imports from and exports to each country was as follows:

Table with columns: Imports, Exports. Rows for China and India.

It will be seen at a glance that the value of our exports to China, when compared with that of our imports, is very trifling. China is, at present, therefore, more benefited by us than we are by her. This inequality in values is the inevitable result of that restrictive policy, which has confined foreign trade almost wholly to the limits of Canton. If we were better known, our exports would be more valuable.