

night, before Gen. Hancock's brigade and several other brigades, under Gen. Smith. Gen. Beauregard commanded the rebel forces in person. During the fight our troops drove the enemy back three miles, nearly into Petersburg. We hold the railroad between Richmond and Petersburg.

Gen. Kautz's cavalry succeeded in destroying some portion of the Petersburg and Weldon (N. C.) railroad at Hickford, and captured many rebel prisoners. Twenty guns at Fort Monroe to-day, including captains and lieutenants.

OFFICIAL VIEWS OF THE CAMPAIGN.

We transfer to our columns, as matter of interest connected with the present military campaign, the subjoined despatches of Mr. STANTON, Secretary of War, to Major General DIX, in command at New York. In the absence of the text of the despatches of Gen. Grant and Meade, (none of which have yet been published since the beginning of the recent movement, these *résumés* of the Department are the most direct and official intelligence that has transpired.

Secretary Stanton to Gen. Dix.

WASHINGTON, MAY 8-9 A. M.
To Gen. JOHN A. DIX, New York.

We have no official reports from the front; but the Medical Director has notified the Surgeon General that the wounded were being sent to Washington, and will number from six to eight thousand.

The Chief Quartermaster of the Army of the Potomac has made requisition for seven days' grain, and for railroad construction trains, and states that the enemy is reported to be retreating. This indicates Gen. Grant's success and affords an inference of material success on our part.

The enemy's strength has always been most felt in his first blows, and his effort having failed, and our forces not only having maintained their ground, but preparing to advance, and the hope of the enemy being that he would either party fall back disorganization by strategical and desertion commences, and the enemy's loss in killed and wounded must weaken him more than we are weakened.

Nothing later than my last night's despatch has been received from Gen. Butler.

A despatch from Gen. Sherman, dated at five o'clock P. M. yesterday, states that Gen. Thomas had occupied Tunnel Hill, where he expected a battle, and that the enemy taken position at Burnside and Pas. north of Dalton. Skirmishing had taken place, but no real fighting. Nothing later from Gen. Banks.

You may give such publicity to the information transmitted to you as you deem proper. It is designed to give a reliable official statement of what is known to the Department in this great crisis, and to withhold nothing from the public. EDWIN M. STANTON, Secretary of War.

Second Despatch of Secretary Stanton.

WASHINGTON, MAY 8-5 P. M.
Major Gen. JOHN A. DIX, New York.

We are yet without any official despatches from the Army of the Potomac, but the reports from the Medical Director and Chief Quartermaster, and nothing additional has been received by the Department from any other source. It is believed that no fighting took place yesterday.

Part of the enemy arrived in ambulances this morning at Rappahannock Station, and on the way in by railroad. The Department will probably receive despatches by train, which will arrive to-night.

A despatch from Gen. Butler, just received, and which will be sent to you by train, states that the enemy had been made by his forces on the railroad between Petersburg and Richmond, and had succeeded in destroying a portion of it so as to break the connection; that there had been some severe fighting, but that he had succeeded. He heard from a rebel deserter that James was dangerously wounded, Pickett also, and Jones and Jenkins were killed.

Nothing further has been heard from Gen. Sherman. EDWIN M. STANTON, Secretary of War.

Third Despatch of Secretary Stanton.

WASHINGTON, MAY 9-10 45 A. M.

Major General DIX: We have intelligence this morning by scouts direct from the army as late as Saturday evening, but no official reports. The general result may be stated as a success to our arms.

The fighting on Friday was the most desperate known in modern times. I deeply regret to say that the country was not more fully prepared to meet the emergency. A soldier, Brig. Gen. Wadsworth, who was struck in the forehead by a ball, at the head of his command, while leading them against one of the enemy's strongest positions. His remains are in our hands, in charge of Col. Sharpe. Gen. Webb was wounded. Gen. Jones, of the rebel army, was killed.

The condition of our army is represented to be most admirable. Their cool, determined courage has in every instance proved too much for the desperate fury of the rebels, who have been driven at all points. There has been no straggling.

At the latest accounts Hancock was pushing forward rapidly by the left to Spottsylvania Court House, and yesterday heavy cannonading was heard at Aquia Creek or from that direction, until three o'clock.

We have had no news from the 7th Pennsylvania Reserves, charged through an abatis of the enemy, but were unable to get back, and most of them were captured. We have also taken a large number of prisoners, supposed to be more than we lost.

The wounded had not yet arrived at the point whence the trains were to receive them. The Medical Director reports that a large proportion are slight wounds. Artillery was not used on either side the first two days.

There is nothing later from Gen. Butler than the date of his last despatch.

Gen. Sherman was heard from last night. He had been all day reconnoitering the enemy's position, and would attack to-day. EDWIN M. STANTON.

Fourth Despatch of Secretary Stanton.

WASHINGTON, MAY 9-11 30 A. M.

To Major Gen. DIX: The Department has just received, from Gen. Butler, the official report of Gen. Lee of the operations of Friday. He says their loss in killed is not large, but they have many wounded. He grieves to announce that Gen. Longstreet was severely wounded, Gen. Jones killed, and Gen. Pickett badly wounded on Saturday, and that it is supposed that Gen. Stafford will recover. He thinks a merciful God that every advance on their (Gen. Grant's) part has been repulsed. He states that our forces attacked them and caused some confusion. General Wadsworth's body lies in our hands, but our reports of this morning state that it is now in our possession, under charge of Col. Sharpe, as stated in my first despatch of this morning. The belief here is that Lieutenant Gen. Grant is achieving a complete victory. EDWIN M. STANTON.

Fifth Despatch of Secretary Stanton.

WASHINGTON, MAY 9-4 o'clock P. M.

Major Gen. DIX: Despatches have just reached here direct from Gen. Grant. They are not fully deciphered yet; but he is "on to Richmond!" We have taken two thousand prisoners. EDWIN M. STANTON, Secretary of War.

Sixth Despatch of Secretary Stanton.

WASHINGTON, MAY 9-4 P. M.

Major Gen. DIX: A career of despatches from Gen. Meade's headquarters has just reached here, and states that Lee's army commenced falling back on the night of Friday. Our army commenced the pursuit on Saturday. The rebels were in full retreat for Richmond by the direct road. Hancock passed through Spottsylvania Court House at daylight yesterday. A large force of cavalry and artillery were twenty miles south of the battle-field. We occupy Fredericksburg. The twenty-second New York cavalry occupied that place at eight o'clock last night. The depot for our wounded is established at Fredericksburg. EDWIN M. STANTON, Secretary of War.

REBEL VIEWS OF THE CAMPAIGN.

Richmond papers of Friday and Saturday have received Gen. Lee's this morning to the War Department the results of the battle of Thursday.

HEADQUARTERS ARMY NORTHERN VIRGINIA, MAY 5, 1862.

Hon. Secretary of War: The enemy crossed the Rapid-Ann yesterday at Ely's and Germania ferries. Two corps of this army moved to meet him—Ewell by the old turning and Hill by the plank road. They arrived this morning in close proximity to the enemy's line of march. A strong attack was made upon Ewell, who repulsed it, capturing many prisoners and four pieces of artillery. The enemy subsequently concentrated on Gen. Hill, who, with Hetta's and Wilcox's divisions, successfully resisted repeated and desperate assaults. A large force of cavalry and artillery on our right flank were driven back by Rucker's brigade. By the blessing of God we maintained our position against every effort all night, when the contest closed. We have to mourn the loss of many brave officers and men. The gallant Brig. Gen. J. M. Jones was killed, and Brig. Gen. Stafford, I fear, mortally wounded, while leading his command with conspicuous valor. K. E. LEE.

Despatches in the Richmond papers all show that as late as Friday Gen. Lee's headquarters remained at Orange Court-House. The Sentinel of the 7th instant says: "From despatches received yesterday it appears that the battle was renewed on Friday morning about daylight, and was still raging furiously at last accounts. The President received a despatch from the army yesterday of a most satisfactory character." A despatch from Major Dooley of the ambulance corps, says "the news is most

alarming." We may not get a despatch before our paper is put to press containing later intelligence. That every thing is progressing favorably on the Rapid-Ann we have not the least doubt.

The Richmond Enquirer of the 7th says that about seventeen hundred Yankee prisoners have arrived at Orange Court-House, and it claims that the Confederates were successful in the Friday's fight, and pushed Grant back to near Chancellorsville. The following casualties are reported:

Gen. Longstreet, painfully wounded in the shoulder; Brig. Gen. Paul Jenkins, of South Carolina, mortally wounded; Col. J. Thompson Brown, of the 1st Virginia artillery, was shot through the head and killed; Col. Warren, 8th Virginia, Col. Miller, Nance, and Gardner, of South Carolina, were killed. Gen. Battle, Alabama, and Jordan's Georgia brigades suffered severely. Col. Randolph, of Virginia, was also killed. Gen. J. M. Jones, of Virginia, killed.

The Enquirer says that Generals Jenkins and Longstreet were wounded by their own men through mistake. Gen. Walker, of the Stonewall Brigade, and Gen. George H. Steuart, of Maryland, are reported killed. Gen. Henning, wounded. The Sentinel says:

The following despatch, dated at Orange Court-House yesterday (May 6th), has been courteously furnished as for publication:

"Col. H. Hill, Pay Department: We are driving the Yankees at all points this morning. Gen. A. P. Hill and staff all safe. K. E. LEE."

The Enquirer has a special despatch, dated at Orange Court-House on the 6th instant, which says:

"A severe fight took place last evening at Mine Run. Two thousand rebel Yankees were captured, and have been brought to the front. Generals and killed out of Johnson's divisions were engaged in the battle. The Louisiana brigade suffered severely. The details will be sent to you as soon as they can be obtained."

The following paragraphs are extracted from other Confederate despatches, all dated at Orange Court-House during the day and evening of the 6th instant:

"A considerable engagement occurred yesterday about twenty miles below here, near Parker's store, in Spottsylvania county, on the plank-road, between a part of the 1st and 2nd Corps and the 5th Corps of Yankees, including Sykes's Regulars. The engagement lasted from 12 o'clock until night. Our troops repulsed the enemy most handsomely, capturing 981 privates and 41 commissioned officers, who have arrived here. Gen. T. M. Jones and Col. Warren, of 8th Virginia, are killed, and Gen. Stafford is mortally wounded."

Generals Heth and Wilcox were in the fight yesterday; they checked and drove back three corps and two divisions of the enemy.

The 1st North Carolina brigade last night surprised and captured thirty prisoners. Gen. Pegram is painfully wounded in the knee.

From three o'clock until night there was very heavy musketry fighting, but little artillery engaged. Cook's brigade fought well and loses heavily. Morney and McGowan's brigades also suffered considerably. Rucker fought Wilcox's whole division of Yankee cavalry with a single brigade, driving them back at all points.

The attack by the enemy this (Friday) morning was very violent. They were repulsed in every instance. A strong effort was made to turn our right flank, but on our left, but they were stubborn on the right until Longstreet finally forced them to give way. General Longstreet received a severe wound in the shoulder. General Paul Jenkins was mortally wounded.

The fighting was principally with musketry, the ground being unsuitable for artillery. Col. Brown, of the Virginia artillery, was killed. The battle was fought near the Wilderness. The enemy have been pushed back to Chancellorsville. Every thing looks well.

Fighting resumed this morning, mostly with musketry. It is believed that we are driving them. Gen. Henning was slightly wounded in the arm. Three hundred more prisoners have reached here, and more are on the way to Richmond. The ambulance committee arrived here this morning.

It is claimed by the Richmond papers that Lee has taken from four to five thousand prisoners, including the 9th Pennsylvania Reserves, who were captured in charging through an abatis of the enemy.

THE AGRICULTURAL DEPARTMENT.

Bi-Monthly Report for March and April of the Agricultural Department.

This report will be issued this week. The leading article shows the nature of the plans adopted in Great Britain, Prussia, and the United States to estimate and report speedily the amount and condition of the crops.

The table most interesting to farmers and provision dealers is the one that exhibits the amount of farm stock in January last. Compared with the amount in 1859, as returned in the census of 1860, it is as follows in the loyal States:

	Horses.	Mules.	Cattle and Oxen.
1859.....	4,199,141	391,869	7,941,143
1864.....	4,049,142	280,847	7,965,439

	Cows.	Sheep.	Hogs.
1859.....	5,736,964	15,104,272	17,069,035
1864.....	6,066,748	14,246,391	16,148,712

This table exhibits an actual decrease of horses, mules, and hogs, a very small increase of cattle, a large increase of cows, but no still far below the usual increase, and a very great increase of sheep. The report points out the strong inducements that farmers have to increase all kinds of stock that is thus rapidly falling off. The number of sheep will be increased by the lambs of this spring to nearly thirty millions, or double what it was in 1859.

The decrease in hogs is 911,263. This is an important fact to provision dealers and farmers, for it shows that but few hogs, if any, were kept over on account of the loss of the corn crop, as has been generally believed. The condition of hog raising from 1850 to this time is examined, and the opinion given that even if there had been a good corn crop, there would have been a decrease in the number of hogs packed.

The number of falling cattle is reported to be thirty per cent. less than last year in Pennsylvania, Ohio, Indiana, and Michigan; twenty-five per cent. less in New York, Iowa, and Illinois; and twenty per cent. less in Missouri and Wisconsin. The general decrease is nearly thirty per cent.

The condition of nearly all stock is below the usual spring average, especially of hogs, but sheep are in excellent order, having received more than ordinary attention. Hence, the yield of wool per head will be as much as usual.

The condition of wheat and other crops soon last fall is represented as indicating a largely decreased product from the crop of last year, but it is hoped that they have improved from the recent rains, and since the returns of the correspondents were sent in, which was on the first day of April. The dryness of February and March retarded the usual growth in these months.

It is believed that the production of maple sugar and molasses will be unusually large, as the preparations for it were greater than usual.

Bees are reported as having suffered much during the winter.

The usual amount of statistics showing the trade in agricultural products is given, and the meteorological part of the report, prepared at the Smithsonian Institute, is very full, and completely exhibits the phenomena attending the remarkable cold storms of the past winter.

The rains have been heavy and general, retarding much the putting in of spring wheat and other crops, but whether the amount put in will be materially lessened in consequence cannot now be known.

THE WOUNDED.

Several additional hundreds of the soldiers wounded in Virginia reached this city yesterday. The accommodations here are ample for a large number. Many of them, however, are to be provided for below and at Fredericksburg, and, for the comfort of these, great promptness and energy have been exercised in forwarding supplies and hospital stores. A large quantity of ice, together with delicacies and other things, have also been promptly sent by steamer from Alexandria. It is said to be the intention of the Government to employ steamers to convey the seriously wounded to hospitals at the North, where the cool atmosphere will conduce to recovery.

MASSACHUSETTS RECRUITS.

A despatch to the North dated in this city on Saturday says: "Since permission was given to soldiers in the regular service who re-enlist to select any State to which they may choose to be credited as part of its quota, and to receive its bounty, large numbers have been secured here by agents from New England cities and towns. Boston has thus obtained over one thousand men. A larger number of negroes have also been enlisted by recruiting agents, one of whom have picked the lion's share of large local bounties paid."

WASHINGTON.

THURSDAY, MAY 12, 1864.

HOW TO PRESERVE THE PUBLIC CREDIT.

It will be remembered that the present Secretary of the Treasury, in his first report on the finances, made to the Thirty-seventh Congress convened on the 4th of July, 1861, in extraordinary session, was careful to include in his measures for the preservation of the public credit "an adequate provision by taxation for the punctual payment of the interest on loans and for the creation of a gradually increasing fund for the redemption of the principal." In his annual report for December, 1861, he renewed the expression of this opinion in the following terms:

"Already in a former report the Secretary has had the honor of stating the principles by which, as he conceives, the proportions of taxation and loans should be determined. His objection has only confirmed his opinion that adequate provision by taxation for ordinary expenditures, for prompt payment of interest on the public debt, existing and authorized, and for the gradual extinction of the principal, is indispensable to a sound system of finance. The idea of perpetual debt is not of American nativity, and should not be naturalized."

It is known that the public debt entailed by the Revolutionary war was gradually extinguished by the financial plan of Alexander Hamilton. That plan, as communicated in his celebrated report of January 9, 1790, and as expounded in subsequent reports, proceeded on the following principles:

"First. 'To constitute a fund sufficient in every disposable event for extinguishing the whole of the present debt of the United States in a period not exceeding thirty years.'"

"Second. 'To fix its destination unchangeably, by not only appropriating it permanently under the title of Commissioners, and vesting it in them as property in trust, but by making its faithful application a part of the contract with the creditors.'"

These principles were embodied in the legislation of Congress, and it was the system thus inaugurated and established which restored the public credit of the country and led to the extinction of the public debt. By the act of August 4, 1790, commonly called "the funding act," it was provided that, after a reservation made for the payment of the civil expenses of the Government, the residue of the receipts from customs should be "appropriated to the payment of the interest on the loans heretofore made by the United States in foreign countries, and also to the payment of interest on such further loans as may be obtained for discharging the arrears of interest thereupon, and the whole or any part of the principal thereof." And to this it was added that the said surplus of receipts, over the sum thus reserved, should "continue so appropriated until the said loans shall be fully satisfied."

In an act approved August 10, 1790, making further provision for the payment of the debts of the United States, by an increase of the duties on imports, it was enjoined in the 7th section of the act that "the several duties imposed by this act shall continue to be so collected and paid until the debts and purposes for which they are pledged and appropriated shall be fully discharged; provided that nothing herein contained shall be construed to prevent the Legislature of the United States from substituting other duties or taxes, of equal value to any or all of the said duties and imposts."

And in the act approved August 12, 1790, making provision for the reduction of the public debt, it was enacted that "the surplus revenues from imposts should be applied to the purchase of the debt of the United States at its market price, if not exceeding the par or true value thereof." The purchase of this debt was not authorized to be made by the Secretary of the Treasury alone, but under the direction of the President of the Senate, the Chief Justice, the Secretary of State, the Secretary of the Treasury, and the Attorney General for the time being.

By the act of May 8, 1792, these officers were appointed "commissioners" to purchase the debt of the United States out of a fund created for that purpose. This fund was to be applied as follows:

"First, to the purchase of the several species of stock constituting the debt of the United States, at their respective market prices, not exceeding the par or true value thereof, and, as nearly as may be, in equal proportions, until the annual amount of the said funds, together with any other provisions which may be made by law, shall be equal to two per centum of the whole amount of the outstanding funded stock, bearing a present interest of six per centum; thereafter, secondly, to the redemption of the said last mentioned stock, according to the right for that purpose reserved to the United States, until the whole amount thereof shall have been redeemed; and, lastly, after such redemption, to the purchase, at its market price, of any other stock constituting the debt of the United States, which may then remain unredeemed; and such purchase, as far as the fund shall at any time extend, shall be made within thirty days next after each day on which a quarterly payment of interest on the debt of the United States shall become due, and shall be made by a known agent, to be named by the said commissioners."

"Sec. 2. And he is further enacted, That all future purchases of public debt on account of the United States shall be made at the lowest price which the same can be obtained by open purchase, or by receiving sealed proposals, to be opened in the presence of the commissioners, or persons authorized by them to make purchases, and the persons making such proposals."

"Sec. 3. And he is further enacted, That quarterly accounts of the application of the said fund shall be rendered for settlement, as other public accounts, accompanied with returns of the sums of the said debt which shall have been from time to time purchased or redeemed; and full and exact reports of the proceedings of the said commissioners, including a statement of the disbursements which shall have been made and of the sums which shall have been purchased or redeemed under their direction, and specifying dates, prices, parties, and places, shall be laid before Congress within the first fourteen days of each session which may ensue the present, during the execution of the said trust."

By the act of March 3, 1795, it was provided that the moneys accruing to the sinking fund under that act, and under all preceding acts, should be under the direction of the above designated officers, as "commissioners of the sinking fund," and that the said moneys "shall be and continue appropriated to the said fund until the whole of the present debt of the United States, foreign and domestic, funded and unfunded, including future loans which may be made for reimbursing or redeeming any instalments or parts of principal of said debt, shall be reimbursed and redeemed; and shall be and are hereby declared to be vested in the said commissioners in trust, to be applied according to the provisions of the act of the 8th day of May, 1792, and of this act, to the reimbursement and redemption of the said debt, until the same shall be fully reimbursed and redeemed."

This is the plan of finance devised by Hamilton, to which Mr. Webster referred when, speaking of the illustrious first Secretary of the Treasury, he said: "He smote the rock of the national resources, and

abundant streams of revenue gushed forth; he touched the solid rock of the public credit, and it sprang upon its feet. The faded honors of the heroes of Rome were hardly more sudden or more perfect than the financial system of the United States, as it burst forth from the conception of Alexander Hamilton."

We have been induced to recur to these principles, embodied in the early legislation of the country, by the perusal of a pamphlet on the present public debt of the United States, in which it is the object of the writer to demonstrate the advantages of the Hamiltonian system, as compared with that which has grown up under the legislation of the last Congress, called to raise loans which, by their magnitude, would seem to demand the greatest guards and guarantees to preserve the public credit. The writer, who, we may say, is a warm personal and political friend of the present distinguished Secretary of the Treasury, signals what he conceives to be the defects of our present system, as compared with that of Hamilton, in the following terms:

"We have thus, in support of the wisdom and efficacy of this system, the sanction of the Father of the Country; but we have that which is more conclusive—the results of experience, in this country, of a perfect system, and of others of an imperfect one. What is the plan of the present system, established by the fifth section of an act authorizing the issue of United States notes, and for the redemption or funding thereof, and for purchasing the floating debt of the United States, passed February 25, 1862? This act declares 'that all duties on imported goods shall be paid in coin, or in notes payable on demand, &c.:' and the duties so paid shall be set apart as a special fund, and applied as follows: first, to the payment, in coin, of the interest on the bonds and notes of the United States; second, to the purchase or payment of one per centum of the entire debt of the United States, to be made within each fiscal year, after July 1, 1862, which is to be set apart as a sinking fund, and the interest of which shall, in like manner, be applied to the purchase or payment of the public debt, as the Secretary of the Treasury shall from time to time direct."

"This system, while the security of permanence. In the appropriation of the duties, it does not declare, in such of the fund set apart as is necessary for that purpose to be applied specifically to the payment of the interest and one per centum of the then existing debt; and it does not declare that the duties so paid shall be set apart as a special fund, and applied as follows: first, to the payment, in coin, of the interest on the bonds and notes of the United States; second, to the purchase or payment of one per centum of the entire debt of the United States, to be made within each fiscal year, after July 1, 1862, which is to be set apart as a sinking fund, and the interest of which shall, in like manner, be applied to the purchase or payment of the public debt, as the Secretary of the Treasury shall from time to time direct."

"This plan affords no other or better security to the creditor for the payment of his interest, or to the people for the progressive payment of the principal of the debts, than that which is afforded by the law which authorized a loan to be made, or bonds or notes to be issued by the Secretary of the Treasury, the faith of the nation is, by that act, pledged for the payment of the interest as it falls due, and for the payment of the principal according to the terms of the loan or of the bonds. Any express pledge of the public faith adding nothing to the implied pledge. The present funding system gives a pledge that the duties on imported goods shall be paid in coin, and that the coin so paid shall be set apart as a special fund, and applied as above. It does no more. Whereas, the true American system makes the revenue appropriate permanent, and carries it to the credit of the commissioner, to be held by them in trust, to be applied, &c. and thus gives it the character of private property, and makes the Government a debtor to the creditor who makes the loan or receives the bond."

WAR AS A TEST OF NATIONAL CHARACTER.

It is justly remarked by Prof. GOLDWIN SMITH (than whom, it is known, the cause of our Government has no more zealous friend in England) that "the best index, after all, of the influence of religion is the national character, and the severest tests of national character are pestilence and civil war." The history of every nation confirms the truth of this observation. The national character is the resultant of all those elements which most conspicuously give tone and complexion to civilized society, and among all these elements the most formative and potential is the religion of the people. And of this religion, considered as a power in the State, there is no criterion which more surely tests its vitality and genuineness than "pestilence and civil war."

How pestilence proves the strength and prevalence of the motives drawn from a "world to come" may be read in the pages of Thucydides describing the plague in Athens, of De Foe describing the plague in London, or of Boesocoe describing the plague in Florence. The whole circle of letters contains no pictures more graphic in point of literary art or more instructive in point of psychological interest for the light they shed on the tendencies of humanity under the stress of great temporal calamities.

It is not difficult to conceive or explain the influences which, in such a time, counteract the sway of spiritual forces. Familiarity with suffering and death blunts the sensibilities of men, while, contemporaneously with this process of hardening, the zest for sensual indulgence is stimulated by the prospect of its speedy interruption. "Let us eat and drink, for to-morrow we die," was the motto of the Epicureans, and all men are Epicureans precisely in proportion to their emancipation from the restraints imposed by considerations of virtue and piety. In a time of storm and impending wreck a portion of the ship's crew shall be seen to put a calm and simple trust in Divine Providence, while another portion may betake themselves to the pantry of the steward and the whiskey casks. The difference in the resorts proves a radical difference in moral character, revealed in its full development by the hour of calamity.

And so, in a time of civil war, as Prof. Smith remarks, the moral quality of men's souls is tried by the fires through which they are called to pass. In some the elements of goodness are melted away by the fervent heats of the ordeal, leaving little but a residuum of dross and baser metal. In others the elements of goodness are annealed into a more ethereal temper and fused into a greater tenacity of composition. The military causes of demoralization are indeed many and obvious, and it is precisely in proportion as they reveal the stamp of the character and bring its tendencies into higher relief. It is in reference to these causes of demoralization that one of our religious contemporaries, the New York "Church Journal," holds the following language:

"That wars are productive of unmitigated evil is what no reasonable man will assert. They are the most salient features in the history of a nation. They are the points at which more than any other time, the moral quality of the people is tested, and the national character is revealed. They draw men out of themselves, and out of the world, and narrow round of daily life and the toil for daily bread, and make them feel the greater and nobler life of the nation as a whole. They call forth splendid acts of daring, self-sacrifice, of devotion to the interests of others. They kindle the beacon lights to which succeeding ages look back, and which glow brighter and brighter with the lapse of time, as other events of contemporaneous history around them are forgotten. They are the great purgatories of the nation. They enter into the oratory, the poetry, the school books, the politics and daily struggles of the times that come after, and thus become a great educating power in forming the national mind and character. All this, and more, is the result of the great and terrible calamity of civil war. It is the only way in which the people will ever be brought to a sense of their own weakness and render renewed thanks to Almighty God for the wonderful goodness and mercy by which He—and none but

He—can bring an such good out of what is in its own nature evil, and which, without the controlling Providence of a Father, would be very evil, and that continually."

"But all this is very evil, and that continually. It will not and ought not to blind the eyes of wise men now to the vast and manifold evils which war brings in its train, and a civil war all over all others: for as these evils come in a day, they are for as to meet, and for us to do what we can to counteract; and therefore we must not look them fairly in the face like men, and know clearly what we are about. There can be no true wisdom in groping after such things in the dark, and stumbling on in silence at midnight, when we might just as well open our eyes and look all round the field, calmly and coolly, in broad daylight."

"There is every probability that, before the war is over, between two and three millions of the male population of this country, in the flower of their life and strength, will have seen more of military service, (reckoning the Southern States as part of the Union, and taking into account their armies also,) and after the experience of arms will have returned to the pursuits of peaceful life, to say nothing of the hundreds of thousands who will by that time have fallen on the battle-field, or will have died in prisons, in hospitals, or from the effect of exposures and hardships in actual service. What is the effect of war upon the characters of all these men? Some may indeed learn the lesson of obedience to authority, which they never would have learned if they had remained in the quietude of their homes. Some may have been rescued by the dangers and hardships of the camp, from the more perilous dangers of luxury, vice, and crime, at home. But that the trade of war is—morally and religiously—a benefit to the mass of those who are engaged in it, who will venture to assert!"

That the most deplorable atrocities have sometimes been committed by our own troops in the South, as well as by the enemy, may not be denied. The familiarity with scenes of blood and violence; the "cleaning out" of properties held by women and children; the sight of thousands turned drifting to hunger and destitution; the sacking and burning of whole villages and towns; the miseries of the poor blacks, who are abused in every way, and are being rapidly exterminated—all these things undoubtedly tend, as our contemporary recites, "to harden the earlier and better sensitiveness of the conscience until enormity ceases to be either strange or repulsive." But that these atrocities are either so general or so wilful as to justify an injurious impression to the discredit of our national character, as compared with that of other nations in a time of civil war, does not so clearly appear. On this point we may cite the testimony of Prof. SMITH when he says:

"The chairman of your Manchester meeting tells us that this is the most ferocious war that has been waged for a century. Not to mention the fact that the war, in which the aged mother of a chief was put to death, and his horribly avenged, or the days of June at Paris, when no quarter was given, and poisoned ill was sent to the wounded, the Irish rebellion of 1798 falls well within a century. Read the account of the reign of terror—the scourges, half-hangings, pitch-burnings, picketing, burnings, plunderings, massacres, carried on by the Anglo-Irish aristocracy and their satellites during the vicereignty of Lord Camden. Read it not in rebel histories, but in the contemporary histories of the time, such as Cornwallis and Abercrombie, who turned away sickened from the sight, and learn how terrible and how difficult to control are the passions of civil war. Butler has gone unscathed; so did Anglo-Irish terrorists ten thousand years ago. Read the account of the wrongs of the Irish people brought under the notice of the House of Lords; but the House of Lords, bishops and all, turned a deaf ear to the complaint."

OUR POLITICAL SOOTHAYERS.

Our readers are aware that as secular journalists we abstain from all attempts to interpret the precise object and purport of the Divine judgments which, in the order of Providence, have marked the change of issues of the present war. This we have done as well from a feeling of reverence as from respect for the prophecies of our position.

Our religious contemporaries are naturally not restrained by this latter consideration, as it is entirely in accordance with their functions "to justify the ways of God to man." We could wish, however, that, in simple regard for their repute as hierophants of the Divine mysteries, they would be a little more careful rightly to divide their commitments, as we apprehend they are in some larger, from rash and inconsiderate speaking, of incurring the frowns denounced by Jeremiah upon "the foolish prophets that follow their own spirit and have seen nothing."

We find, for instance, in a religious contemporary published in Boston, the following explanation of recent reverses which have overtaken our arms: "It is surprising that disasters come to our arms when injustice to the helpless is openly defended! If God has sent judgments on the nation for complicity with slavery; if it is His design by this terrible war to break the yoke of oppression, we may be certain that victory and peace are impossible until full justice is meted out by our Government to the poor black. He must be treated like a man and a brother, or God will not lift the rod. He must receive the same wages as his white comrades, and be shielded by the whole power of the Government when taken captive. The bare account of colored prisoners at Charleston and Fort Pillow must be as sternly regarded as if inflicted on the sons of our Cabinet officers or of our Congressmen."

"Such is our interpretation of the late mournful disaster. It is not a contradiction with,