

THE TRANSVAAL TROUBLE.

The joint overture of Transvaal and the Orange Free State for peace upon the basis of independence of the two republics was denied by Great Britain. The move, however, was a diplomatic victory for President Kruger as he forced England to make known her policy, viz., the extermination of the South African republics. It is difficult to tell what effect the failure of the peace overtures will have upon the war. Now that the Boers realize that their national existence is the price at stake, they are apt to be all the more determined.

Roberts took possession of Bloemfontein without resistance. His tactful and politic manner of treating the people of the town has done much to remove the feeling of hostility and encourage submission on the part of the Free State. President Steyn fled from Bloemfontein upon the approach of Roberts and established headquarters at Kroonstad, 120 miles to the north, on the road to Pretoria and about one-half the distance. Roberts is about to start north in a final move toward Pretoria. Nature has splendidly fortified the Boer capital against the attack of an invading army. Roberts will find his march against Pretoria anything but a pleasure trip if the Boers make up their minds to dispute his advance.

The rebellion is practically over in the Free State. The British have established railway communications to the Cape. The Boers, it is reported, are fortifying Diggarsberg, about fifty-five miles northwest of Ladysmith and in a very mountainous and inaccessible country. It is quite probable that General Buller will next be heard from in the vicinity of this place.

WHIGS AS ANTI-EXPANSIONISTS.

In a very entertaining paper published in the January number of the Suwanee Review, Albert Watkins makes an interesting and instructive comparison between the anti-imperialism of today and the anti-expansion of the whigs at the time of the war with Mexico. The opposition to the war, under the leadership of Webster and Greeley, was bitter and pronounced.

In 1847, at the whig state convention of Massachusetts, Webster said: "Unless the president of the United States shall make out a case that the war is prosecuted for no purpose of acquisition of dominion, for no purpose not connected directly with the safety of the Union, then they (the whig majority in congress) ought not to grant any further supplies." The Tribune of that year said: "The Tribune insists that whigs in congress should vote for withdrawing our army instantly from Mexico, and that the only supplies which they grant shall be those necessary for doing this

safely and comfortably." At the beginning of the war the democrats were in a majority in congress, but as a result of the next election they became the minority party.

In speaking of the house Mr. Watkins says: "Some of the whig members of that house who dealt in scathing denunciation of the war while our soldiers were yet fighting and their ranks were being decimated by the scourge of fever even more than by Mexican bullets were as follows: Senators John J. Crittenden, Thomas Corwin, J. M. Clayton, John P. Hale, Reverdy Johnson, Daniel Webster. Members of the house: John Quincy Adams and Robert C. Winthrop (speaker), of Massachusetts; David Wilmot (of Wilmot Proviso fame), of Pennsylvania; William B. Preston, of Virginia; Alexander H. Stevens, of Georgia; Joshua R. Giddings, Samuel F. Vinton, and Robert C. Schenck, of Ohio; Andrew Johnson, of Tennessee; Caleb Smith and R. W. Thompson of Indiana, and Abraham Lincoln, of Illinois. Outside congress, Seward, Sumner, Greeley and others, who afterwards became leaders of the republican party, alike denounced the war. Seward and Lincoln spoke together at a great meeting in New York City, both severely criticising the war policy of President Polk. The whig state convention of New Hampshire, held November 6, 1847, denounced the war in terms which also sound very familiar to us of present anti-expansion days: 'As citizens of a free country, we claim and shall exercise the right at all times of expressing our opinions of the acts whether of the state or national administrations, and whether these acts relate to peace or war; and that we regard the attempt of the president of the United States, in his last message, to brand as traitors all citizens of the republic who do not yield a blind obedience to his will, and approve his conduct in the unconstitutional commencement of the present war with Mexico, as an insult to freemen, and fit only to emanate from one who rules over slaves.' (Nile's 'Register,' vol. 73, p. 148.)"

General Robert Schenck of Ohio introduced a substitute for the bill for carrying into effect the treaty of peace with Mexico, providing for the giving back to Mexico the territory of California, and was supported by Alexander H. Stevens, of Georgia; Joshua R. Giddings, Horace Mann, Ishmun and Palfrey, of Massachusetts.

The political effect of the opposition to the war upon the party and the individuals making it is thus told by Mr. Watkins: "In this mighty controversy the democratic party, under the leadership of President Polk, defended the war and advocated its resulting acquisition of territory. The arguments used were,

Political Effect.

in substance and in statement, very like those of the republican party in support of the Philippine policy; just as the contentions of the whigs were like those of the democratic opponents of the Philippine policy. So far from being crippled by their anti-expansion course, the whigs not only overcame the democratic majority in the house of representatives as the war was in progress, as has been noted, but in the presidential election immediately following the war they overwhelmingly defeated the democratic war expansion party. It is true that the use of General Taylor, a hero of the war, for their candidate, helped the whigs to win this victory; but that does not alter the fact that the distinctively anti-war party, having retracted nothing of its bitter opposition, defeated the distinctively war expansion party. Nor did the stout opposition to the war and to territorial acquisition, of Lincoln, Seward, Sumner, Johnson, Giddings, and Greeley at all impede their rapid progress to illustrious leadership in the republican party.

"In view of the triumphant success of the whig leaders, both great and small, in their own party, and in its successor, the republican party, after their opposition to the acquirement of contiguous territory—a natural annexation for the rounding out of our then broken and unsymmetrical domain—it is far from the part of wisdom to calculate or to contend that opposition to the annexation or permanent control of an isolated archipelago, six thousand miles from our nearest border, will injure the standing or prospects of any present party or its leaders, or that any attempt to fasten odium upon them on that account will be successful or worth the danger of the undertaking."

FUSION.

Nebraska abounded in the early days with joint snakes. These reptiles taken by the tail and snapped violently, flew into fragments. Each piece became an independent snake, oftentimes however, without head or eyes.

Joint politics and joint snakes are not entirely dissimilar. When a severe shock sunders silver-republicans, separates middle-of-the-road from amalgamation populists and jars off a few discouraged democrats and each variety wiggles off by itself the gentle joint snake is brought to mind. He was the reptilian precursor of the fusion party and not strongly put together.

A DEMORALIZING COURSE.

The leaders in Congress are willing to feed the Puerto Ricans, but not to give them a chance to support themselves by honest work. It is a course which tends to foster idleness, debauchery, and crime, yet it is undertaken deliberately for the sake of a trumpery political advantage. [Philadelphia Ledger (Ind. Rep.)]