

EIGHTEENTH YEAR.

MR. WHITNEY INTERVIEWED

He Tells a London Reporter About the American Navy.

BUILDING SHIPS JUST BEGUN.

Praise for President Cleveland's Administration—Building Instead of Repairing Men-of-War Will Go On.

The Deadly Dynamite Gun.

Copyright 1889 by James Gordon Bennett. LONDON, May 8.—[New York Herald Cable-Special to THE BEE.]—Hon. W. Whitney, who was secretary of the navy in President Cleveland's cabinet for four years, and who is now in London, was asked to-day by a Herald reporter what the United States had accomplished during his term in the matter of improving the navy? At first he was rather disinclined to talk upon the subject, but upon the representation, however, that the subject was one in which not only Americans but Englishmen, also, are greatly interested, and that no one was better qualified than he to furnish the desired information, he consented to speak:

"This is an unequal atmosphere, I am afraid, in which to talk on this subject," he said, "for if you step into the house of commons as I did yesterday, you would find the subject of discussion to be a bill for the expenditure of \$80,000,000 or \$90,000,000 upon new naval construction. To be sure, the bill covers the contemplated construction for the next four years, yet the provisions and strikes, at first thought, appear excessive. It provides an American mast for building in listening to that debate is not the large sum of money asked for, however, as we are not lacking in that regard and are not lacking in a disposition to spend it on naval construction, but it is that the ability to spend that sum at once, involving such enormous ship building facilities, is possessed here."

"You see, the building has to go along, in addition to the ordinary construction for commercial purposes, and indicates the great resources to draw upon. The fact really is, that the United States has now only made a beginning towards building up its navy. The administration of President Cleveland was notable, so far as naval affairs are concerned, more especially in listening to which I have alluded at existing here. It developed in our country, facilities for the creation of a navy, modern in character."

"You do not mean that no ship building has yet been done, do you?"

"Oh, no, we are building a good many ships now; but I refer to the most notable ships and armor. Upon the accession of President Cleveland to power, neither armor nor high-power guns, of a calibre above eight inches, nor secondary batteries, could be had in the United States and in the previous twenty years there had not been built altogether ten new vessels."

"Were not large appropriations made, from time to time, for a navy?"

"Yes, but the money appropriated from year to year had been spent in repairs upon old wooden ships, which were really worthless."

"Who was responsible for that?"

"Well, I hardly care to go into that subject now. In fact, our people differ regarding the responsibility for such a state of things existing. However, there is no one among us who does not, at the present time, condemn it. I arose, quite naturally, from the fact that at the close of the war we had the largest in the world at that time, I think, for many years. There was a reason for rebuilding, rather than for repairing old ships, and naturally the policy of repairing old ships, instead of building new ones, became fixed upon us, and, after a series of years, we practically had no serviceable navy, and there was a general lack of confidence in the navy department."

"President Cleveland reversed the policy which has been in force for some years, and the old navy has been allowed to die a natural death. During his administration we have had in course of construction vessels, modern in character, amounting to over 75,000 tons; about one-half of this tonnage is armored ships, and of unarmored ships, those of the class known as protected cruisers. We are building seven of an average of 4,000 tons each, and with a guaranteed speed of nineteen knots and upward. In this class of vessels we will soon rank second only to England."

"I believe you referred to having increased construction facilities?"

"Yes, we have nearly finished, at Washington, an ordnance factory for finishing heavy naval ordnance, cranes, and the necessary machinery for handling gun forgings up to 130 tons, which covers the largest guns afloat upon any vessel in the world. I think upon this, the government has expended, or has in course of expenditure a total sum about \$20,000,000. The department was also entered into a contract with one of our largest and best steel manufacturers, the Bethlehem Iron company, under which a plant is being erected for the production of armor and gun forgings. This plant is to cost something over \$3,000,000. The contract was entered into about two and one-half years since, and the plant will be completed this year."

"Is congress disposed to appropriate money more freely, now, for the navy department, than formerly?"

"Yes, certainly so. The feeling has changed very perceptibly. The disposition now is, in fact, to give the department more money rapidly than it can be put to use, more money than was voted for new naval construction than the department asked for."

"Do you think that the United States will continue the policy of increasing the size and completeness of its navy?"

"I cannot say it should not do so. Necessity, or, at least, the advantage is apparent. There is plenty of money, and public sentiment, as it now exists, will insure such a policy. Of course, with the completion of the new plants, the present secretary of the navy will be able to lay out a much larger programme of expenditure than was possible under the last administration. Under President Cleveland the foundation was thoroughly laid for a navy, adequate to the needs of the United States, and commensurate with her dignity and position among the nations of the world, and it is to be hoped and expected that the foundation will be built upon."

EX-UNION SOLDIERS CAN STAY

Tanner Refuses to Accept a Veteran's Resignation.

HE IS NOT BOUNCING PATRIOTS.

The Nebraska Delegation Recommend Judge Mason, of Lincoln—William E. Chandler Goes On Palmer's Bond.

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PARNELL SCORES WEBSTER.

Accuses Him of Wresting the Spirit of His Speeches.

ARCH-BISHOP WALSH TESTIFIES.

The Irrepressible Biggar Nearly Gets Into Trouble Trying to Help the Prelate Give Effective Testimony.

Parnell's Examination Ended.

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POTTER'S PESSIMISM.

Chauncey Depew Thinks It Ill-Timed and Unfounded.

New York, May 8.—[Special Telegram to THE BEE.]—Bishop Potter's pessimistic sermon is still worrying many minds. A reporter to-day called on Chauncey Depew to get the opinion of that gentleman on the matter.

"On a great national occasion such as this," said Mr. Depew, "I thought the central idea was to promote patriotism by showing what constitutional government has done for America, and the value of the character and services of the men who created the government and stamped upon it the impress of their own individuality and opinions. I do not think it was the time for an orator to touch upon or develop existing evils or dangers."

"Then you do admit that there are evils and dangers?"

"There are some evils and dangers, but I think they are, in comparison with the blessings and benefits we enjoy, like spots on the sun. An man who will study the history of the first twenty-five years of the republic will discover that in intellectual, literary, moral and political progress the people of to-day are infinitely more advanced than were those of Washington's generation. That we need to improve our civil service, and by it our public service, is unquestionably true. To prevent the corrupt use of money in our elections is the urgent necessity of the time. That we want better regulation of the liquor traffic every right-minded person admits; and these improvements are a pressing concern of the people, and they will concentrate their attention on them."

"Then you have no fears for the future of the republic?"

"No, sir."

FOREST FIRES.

Reports of the Destruction of Property Still Coming In.

EAST SAOBRAS, Mich., May 8.—[Special Telegram to THE BEE.]—Reports of the destruction of property by fires in the woods still come in. The air is thick with smoke. In the township of Kewadin, Bay county, five farms have been burned over and everything inflammable destroyed. Rust Bros. & Co., of this city, have lost their camps, equipage and half a million feet of logs near Alger, and the highway bridges in that section have been destroyed. The upper branch of the Tittabawassee river, the Au Gres, the Rifle and other streams are also at so low a stage that logs burn even in the beds of the streams.

At Frankfort, Mich., forest fires are raging on every side. Much fencing and many other things have been destroyed, but no loss of life has been reported.

GRAND RAPIDS, Mich., May 8.—[A dispatch from Sullivan, a town of 100 inhabitants,