

## THE END AT LAST.

THERE are two bills now before Congress which, if the Reconstruction process be capable of completion, ought to complete it. One provides for the execution of the Fifteenth Amendment, by forbidding, under the sanction of appropriate penalties, all attempts, direct or indirect, and either of omission or commission, to prevent colored persons entitled to the franchise from exercising it. Another, introduced by Mr. Sumner, provides for the admission of colored persons on equal terms to all hotels, public conveyances, licensed theatres and places of public amusement, and public institutions; and he admits that, if this be passed, there will be *nothing left undone* that legislation can do to improve the condition of the colored man. We hope they will both be passed without any unnecessary delay. There are so many ways of cheating people out of their votes, and there are so many voters whom it is easy to cheat, that we may be sure, in a large number of places, negroes would, by one trick or other, be robbed of their share in elections, no matter how solemnly guaranteed to them by the Constitution, unless the various modes of defrauding them were enumerated, punishment prescribed for each, and the exact mode of getting it inflicted pointed out.

As regards Mr. Sumner's bill, nobody who knows how a prejudice feeds upon itself—that is, how readily the doing of a thing presents itself to many people's minds as a justification for doing it—will have much to say against it. Nobody denies that if there were no prejudice against color it would be a great gain for the country, and any attempt to diminish it by legislation which does not seem likely to do anything to increase it, is certainly worth trying. It is not possible to allow keepers of public conveyances to shut people out from any accommodation to which their money would otherwise entitle them on account of their complexion, without acknowledging that our equality before the law is a mockery, and we know, as the result of actual experiment in various parts of the country, that the objection to riding with colored people in the cars and stages is a mere whim. When we propose to force hotel-keepers and managers of theatres to admit them on equal terms, we get, naturally, on more delicate ground, and ground on which the law may be more readily evaded, and that it would be evaded somehow we do not doubt; but evading it would be troublesome and expensive, often fully as much so as obeying it, and we have very little doubt that before long landlords and managers both would succeed in persuading white gentlemen and ladies that there really was no strong objection to staying in the same hotel, or enjoying one's self at the same theatre, with colored people, from whom the same guaranties for dress and behavior had been exacted as from the rest of the company.

But then it does seem as if two such measures, which even the most exacting of Radicals acknowledge to be all that can be asked for, ought, in order to ensure their efficiency, to be accompanied by a general restoration of the South to its normal condition; or, in other words, to the government of the majority of its inhabitants. We have no desire to exaggerate the evils of the existing state of things, and have no great pity for the "leading citizens" who are now atoning for the folly of twenty years by temporary subjection to the rule of their former slaves. Those who play high must not whimper if they lose heavily. But then the Government of the United States has something to think of besides either punishing the whites for their treason or rewarding the blacks for their fidelity. The interests of civilization and of good government at the South are in its keeping, and there is no question whatever that both are suffering deeply—not by the accession of the colored people, but by the accession of ignorant people, to power—and may suffer irretrievably, if the present régime be protracted much longer. It is not possible any longer to confine any political or social evil to a particular State. With our present habits and means of intercommunication, everything spreads all over the country, the good as well as the bad. No State can keep its corruption or its bad character, any more than its virtue, to itself; and the seeds of the vices and disorders we suffer to flourish in South Carolina and Louisiana, we may be sure, will be wafted before long further north, and find a fruitful soil enough. The more legislatures we have accessible to temptation, the larger the class of jobbers who live by tempting legislators grows, and

the wider the belief that all legislators are corrupt, and may be expected to be corrupt, spreads.

We have spoken several times in these columns of the grossness of the disorders in which the government of several States is plunged in the hands of the negroes and carpet-baggers, gathering our opinions simply from newspaper articles and correspondence and occasional private advices. Very recently, business men of the highest character, both from this city and from Boston, have been examining the state of things there with reference to investments both for themselves and their friends, and, of course, one of the very first things to which their attention was turned was the government, for government means taxation, and on the manner and amount and application of taxation depend the rate of profits, the prospects of immigration, and the probability of internal improvements. No man will willingly invest much capital in a State whose revenues he has reason to believe will be squandered, or credit destroyed, or whose legislation cannot be depended on for a reasonable degree of uniformity and honesty. Now the reports of these gentlemen—and the two we have in our eye have been ardent Republicans and supporters of the Reconstruction policy of Congress, and do not believe any other policy was possible or desirable—describe things as being nearly as bad as bad can be. The effect on the freedman of the spectacle of large bodies of his fellows in a state of the grossest ignorance put suddenly in possession of the government of great, civilized, and wealthy communities, is of course as demoralizing as the sudden discovery of a parcel of diamonds, and just as likely to turn his mind away from steady industry, and to destroy his faith in the political value of knowledge. But this is not the worst of it. Their management of the State funds has been such, and is such, as to endanger American credit everywhere, to frighten away capital, and make general bankruptcy at some not very distant day by no means improbable. Moreover, no society was ever long subjected to such a régime without suffering in its very vitals, without finding the stock of honor, truth, decency, and patriotism on which it has to draw every now and then, to carry it through exciting times, greatly and perhaps fatally diminished.

The remedy for all this is to pass an act of general amnesty, and leave every community to its natural action. Let whatever there is of intelligence in it resume its natural weight. It is as much the interest of the negro as of the white man—indeed, far more the interest of the negro than of the white man—that the States should be well governed, and most of the political talent and experience is in the hands of white men, who are either disfranchised themselves, or so disgusted by the disfranchisement of their friends, that they will take no part at present in political affairs. No closing of the Reconstruction process will be safe or real which does not give them their *natural* influence on the government; artificial influence they have lost for ever; but of the other it is an offense against civilization to deprive them.

## JURY MORALITY.

SUCH a failure of justice as occurred in the McFarland case, shocking as it was, would be of some value to the community if it would lead to something more practical than lamentations in the newspapers over the indulgence of juries for certain classes of crimes. There are signs, such as the adoption of the Judiciary Amendment to the Constitution, the new election law, and the formation of the Bar Association of this city, that the popular interest in questions of legal reform begins to revive in this State, and that there will hereafter be more use in calling attention to defects in our jurisprudence than there has been for some years past. Nearly everybody has at last got over the delusion that the election of all officers by "the people" is a cure-all; we shall before long get over the sister delusion that giving everybody the ballot is a cure-all; and then we shall be able to go to work to improve our condition by rational methods.

In the meantime, we wish to call attention to the fact that the tame acquiescence of the bench, the bar, and the press in such verdicts as was rendered in the McFarland case, is really cherishing and spreading the false notions both of public and private morality from which these verdicts flow. The origin of the impunity now accorded

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