

SPIRIT OF THE PRESS.

EDITORIAL OPINIONS OF THE LEADING JOURNALS UPON CURRENT TOPICS—COMPILED WEEKLY FOR THE EVENING TELEGRAPH.

The President Elect.

From the London Spectator.

The New York Tribune published three days before the Presidential election a very noteworthy contribution, occupying rather more than five columns of small type. It is a collection of the speeches, letters, general orders, and sayings absolutely known to have proceeded from General Grant since his appointment to the command of an army in the field, that is, since the siege of Vicksburg. The collection includes every speech, all orders of any importance, all letters bearing upon public policy, and every saying absolutely authentic, and one of the most remarkable facts about it is that the whole can be read through in an hour. The terrible publicity to which American politicians are condemned to submit—publicly as of life under a burning glass—is producing the consequence of any other tyranny, an unnatural reticence as to opinions, concealed by the majority under a cloud of words, and by General Grant under a studious silence, or a grimly humorous diversion of the talk to the merits of the last new trotter. He does not care about trotters particularly, but he talks trotters," just as Walpole "talked women," as a subject interesting to all men, but unconnected with political issues. Every word and then, however, he has been compelled to break silence, sometimes almost involuntarily, and his utterances, when read together, let a flood of light on his character and policy. As General Grant will be for four years premier of the United States, our readers may possibly be interested in revelations at least as important to this country as the ideas of the Emperor Napoleon.

First and foremost, then, General Grant is fixedly determined that slavery in all its forms shall remain ended, that free labor with all its consequences shall be the rule of the Union from Maine to Florida. He is no abolitionist, seems ever to have been clear that slavery was a crime, though he entertained no Southern feeling, intimates for the negro as little liking as dislike, and expressly avows that it was a hard task to him to contemplate negro suffrage as a necessity. It is as statesman and American that he is clear the system must end—end completely and for ever; that the negro must be recognized officially and socially, not only as a man, but as an American citizen. The progress of his mind upon this point is very curious. He wrote to Brigadier Parke, while lying before Vicksburg, "Use the negroes and every thing within your command to the best advantage"—not, he noted, every person. This distinction proceeded, however, from no contempt for the black race, such as many generals at that time did not hesitate to express. "I expect," he writes in January, 1862, "the commanders especially to exert themselves in carrying out the policy of the Administration, not only in organizing colored regiments and rendering them efficient, but also in removing prejudice against them," a prejudice which within his command rapidly disappeared. Even before this General Grant had issued stern orders for the protection of colored soldiers, informing General Halleck in particular that "it was the duty of Union generals to give the same protection to colored troops that they do to any other troops" in the service of the United States; and one year later he wrote to General Butler that no distinction whatever should be made in the exchange of white and colored prisoners if regularly enrolled in the army. He had, moreover, even then, 1862, made up his mind on the political side of the matter, for he wrote on August 30 to the Hon. E. L. Washburne in these emphatic terms:—"I never was an abolitionist, not even when called by that name, but I try to judge fairly and honestly, and it became patent to my mind, early in the Rebellion, that the North and South could never live at peace with each other except as one nation, and that without slavery. As anxious as I am to see peace established, I would not therefore be willing to see any settlement until this question is forever settled." This was written, he it remembered, before Vicksburg had fallen, when it seemed to weak men as if the North must make some concession if peace was ever to be secured. The General himself thought they must yield some points, but he determined that if his mind had been opened till he was prepared to admit the negro not only to freedom as a reward for State service, not only to freedom as a man, but to equality as a citizen. "I never," he said, "could have believed that I should favor giving negroes the right to vote, but that seems to me the only solution of our difficulties."

Upon this, the main point of the whole dispute between American parties, no opinion could be more clear; and it is the opinion of a man slow to receive new impressions, not specially philanthropic, not perhaps inclined even now to demand more justice for the oppressed, but invariably fixed to secure that. We can quite conceive General Grant vetoing a bill to give negroes land for nothing, while hanging whites who robbed them of land purchased with their own savings. Color is to him no recommendation, but also no disqualification, the only true attitude of mind of the ruler of a parti-colored State. Upon subsidiary points the President elect is equally clear and decisive, and his policy is perhaps best explained in a sentence from his letter accepting the nomination by the Chicago Convention:—"In times like the present it is impossible, or at least eminently improper, to propose a policy to be adhered to, right or wrong, through an administration of four years. New political issues not foreseen are constantly arising, the views of the public on old ones are constantly changing, and a purely administrative officer should always be left free to execute the will of the people. I always have respected that will, and always shall." This idea incessantly crops out in his letters and seems nearly allied with the grand peculiarity of his mind, a love of order and subordination. A mad suggestion was made during the late campaign to place Sherman above Grant; and Sherman, always loyal, wrote to his chief repudiating the plan. Grant replied, "If you are put above me I shall always obey you, just as you always have me." Only those who know the tenacity of soldiers about supercession can adequately comprehend the serene simplicity of this reply, and only those who know how politics are ingrained in prominent Americans can appreciate the letter to Mr. Chase affirming that "no theory of my own will ever stand in the way of my executing in good faith any order I may receive from those in authority over me." He regards "the people" as his ultimate commanding officer, and asks only that their orders be intelligible and consistent. This love of discipline is tempered with great personal kindness to inferiors, a feeling best illustrated perhaps by his absolute refusal to break four or five officers who had behaved badly, or rather stupidly, in an early fight. They had never, said the General, been under fire before, and they had learned their lesson; and he positively declined even to report

them. "Bah!" said Nelson, on a somewhat similar occasion, "boys will dook. I did, till I found it was useless;"—and General Grant seems to be of the same temper, a temper not always inconsistent with terrible sternness. There is but one instance of humor, in the popular sense, reported in this collection, though many of the orders are pervaded by a soldierlike directness which is almost humor, and it illustrates the latent sternness in the General's character. It was needed in 1864 to clear, or rather desolate, the Shenandoah Valley, when the enemy was drawing large supplies, and Grant informed his young General of Cavalry, Sheridan, "the valley must be so cleared that crows flying over it will for the season have to carry their own rations"—a remark that might have come from Cromwell in Ireland. Precisely the same spirit is manifested in his intercourse with the supply branches of the Army, and in his general views upon economy. He early perceived the jobbing which is the curse of all operations in free States, and took peremptory measures to stop it, cancelling every contract not made by himself, abolishing the contract system in favor of direct purchases, sternly rebuking his own father for asking favors, and finally suggesting to Halleck that "all fraudulent contractors should be impressed into the ranks, or, still better, gunboat service, where they could have no chance of deserting." One of these days, in some hour of extremity, produced mainly by tolerated frauds, we shall establish a sterner law than that, and carry it out, too, with the approval of all men. The years during which President Grant occupied the White House will clearly not be "good times" for penulators, or for disbeided officials, or for persons who violently disturb the public peace. It is a real relief, amidst the perpetual talk of State rights, President Johnson's Democratic proclamations, and we must add, half-hearted Republican proposals, to come across an opinion as statesmanlike as this. In January, 1867, General Grant recorded the following deliberate opinion on the state of affairs in Texas:—"In my opinion the great number of murders of Union men and freedmen in Texas, not only as a rule unpunished, but investigated, constitute practically a state of insurrection; and, believing it to be the province and duty of every good government to afford protection to the lives, liberties, and property of her citizens, I would recommend the declaration of martial law in Texas to secure these ends. The necessity for governing any portion of our territory by martial law is to be deplored. If resorted to, it should be limited in its authority, and should leave all local authorities and civil tribunals free and unobstructed until they prove their inefficiency or unwillingness to perform their duties. Martial law would give security, or comparative security, to all classes of citizens, without regard to race, color, or political opinions, and should be continued until society was capable of protecting itself, or until the State is returned to its full relation with the Union. The application of martial law to one of these States would be a warning to all, and, if necessary, could be extended to others." It will come to that at last, and every day's delay does but exasperate the evil. As we have maintained from the first, the States which will not allow order to be restored must be governed temporarily by India as governed by a government essentially military, which permits any human being of any color to say what he likes and do what he likes within the laws, but enforces the laws with the bayonet. Any native or European may talk any treason he pleases in the townhall of Calcutta, and no one will punish; but if he interferes with any rights of any other British subject, white or colored, his whole following, or his whole nation, could not save him from arrest and punishment. Unswerving justice is the basis of order; there is no justice either in Texas or in London if the civil rights of the law can be defied by armed force, and the next President of the United States, it is clear, does not intend they should be. We only wish we could be as certain of the next Premier.

General Grant comes out in these letters, and orders, and—no, not speeches—sayings, a soldier politician of the best sort, a man gentle, kindly, and considerate, but with a vein of wrath in him, a man who surveys politics as he would a valley, without seeing every tree, but missing no strategic point, a soldier who is aware that there must be force somewhere to keep society together, but a politician who never forgets that that force shall be law, framed and modified by the representatives of the people. We congratulate the United States on a Premier who dislikes waste, even when the wasteful support his party, and will put down murderers even when they plead the sovereign rights of States.

The Mississippi Body-Snatching.

From the N. Y. World.

The little game in Mississippi is really rich. The excavations go ahead of those at Pompeii. Not satisfied with merely discovering that the negro constitution was not defeated by 7629 majority, but some 25,000 votes being thrown out—carried, the excavators have dug up a full set of bogus Congressmen for the Fortieth Congress. The reader will perceive that this is the Fortieth and not the Forty-first Congress that we say. Contemporaneously with the wonderful resurrection of the negro constitution, it was stated in these columns that a cluster of carpet-bag Congressmen for the session beginning with the term of General Grant had been lugged out of the bowels of nowhere, but it has only been by latest advices from the seat of digging that we receive information of a bag drawn to the Congressional session of next month. This draught is thus mediated, the first and fourth simples having been rooted—dead beats—that formerly boiled in the pot of the negro convention:—

First District—Charles H. Townsend.

Second District—T. N. Martin.

Third District—Charles A. Sullivan.

Fourth District—George C. McKee.

Fifth District—L. W. Perce.

Digging is still in progress, and pending further resurrections, attention is invited to that clause of the "constitution," under which these co-heirs with Lazarus seek Congress, that makes suffrage in Mississippi a matter of opinion, this:—"I, ———, do solemnly swear (or affirm), in the presence of Almighty God * * * * that I admit the civil and political equality of all men, so help me God." (Art. vii, sec. 3, resurrected constitution.)

Our Position in Paraguay.

From the N. Y. World.

It is very agreeable to learn, by "an unofficial letter" from Rear-Admiral Davis, dated not from the waters of Paraguay, but from those of Brazil, that England and France have not been insulted by the Dictator Lopez. It will be still more agreeable to learn from General McMahon, our new Minister to Paraguay, when he reaches that country, that the United States, which have been insulted by the Dictator Lopez, have exacted full reparation from him for that insult. It is difficult to decide whether our diplomatic agents or our naval officers in that part of the world have done most in the last few months to vex the nation's self-respect. Secretary Seward, who combines the serene jollity of Mark Tapley

with the bland confidence of Misowber, allows it to be understood that he is charmed with the behavior of Minister Washburn. Unofficial Americans reading Minister Washburn's own accounts of his own behavior can only hope that his pitiable want of force in the presence of Lopez may have resulted from nothing worse than a general debility of nature. Yet even this forlorn hope it is hard to cherish when we find Rear-Admiral Davis denying, by implication, what Minister Washburn explicitly asserts, and assuring us that there is not and never has been any great harm in Lopez. Washburn excuses his desertion of American interests and of American citizens, his failure to stand by the honor of his position and his flag, by representing Lopez as a kind of ogre whom neither conscience binds nor Vattel and Puffendorf can awe. Davis avers that "the effort made to condemn Lopez by denunciatory exclamations is now gradually dying away!"

Meanwhile, is it or is it not true that two American citizens, entitled to the protection of our Minister at our flag, have been tortured and, it may be, put to death in the prisons of Paraguay?

A subordinate of Rear-Admiral Davis, Commander Kirkland, who conveyed Minister Washburn out of the den of this alleged ogre Lopez, writes home that while he was so conveying Mr. Washburn he went on shore to see Lopez, at the latter's invitation, dined with him very cozily, and received from him a great deal of civility! We are not sure that this is not, on the whole, the most extraordinary contribution yet made to the history of the recent sealions muddle. Here is an American naval officer who is carrying an American Minister out of the clutches of a despot by whom that Minister's life has been menaced, the nation which he represents insulted, and two of its citizens brutally and illegally seized and flung into prison, yet who, leaving the fugitive Minister on board his ship, goes ashore to hob-nob with the despot! We submit that, in any conceivable aspect of the case, it is impossible to consider this conduct of Commander Kirkland creditable either to his instincts as an American or to his intelligence as an officer. He either believed Mr. Washburn's story about his treatment, or he did not believe it. If he believed it, no words can be too sharp to stigmatize, no penalty within the rules of the service too severe to punish, his conduct in holding friendly intercourse with Lopez. If he did not believe it, it was extremely unbecoming for him, as an officer wearing the American uniform, to put himself into relations with Lopez which said to the latter, as plainly as the plainest words could have said it, "I think my country has disgraced herself by sending you such a minister as Washburn, and it affords me pleasure to let you know that I think so before I take him away."

Your Alabama Claim—"Two to One You Don't Get It."

From the N. Y. Herald.

We are somewhat amused at the version given by our Washington correspondent of the arrangement made for the settlement of our Alabama claims with England. If this be the true text of the basis upon which we are to arrange our difficulties, it reminds us of the meaning of the word "settlement" in the parlance of the brokers' shops, indicating, when you place anything in pawn, "two to one you don't get it." Two English Commissioners to one from the United States—that's cool, and can only come from the fertile brain of such a profound statesman as W. H. Seward. We are somewhat tired of this English love-making of Mr. Reverdy Johnson. He is in every way disgracing us. His diplomatic dinners mean the payment of the English rebel cotton bondholders' debt, and it is for this that we see the English privateers builders embracing the American Minister at the Court of St. James. Our Alabama claims should first be presented for payment to the United States Government. The bill should then be forwarded to England for payment, and if this be refused we have the means close at hand to fully indemnify ourselves. What we want, however, is not cash, but an apology for the war waged indirectly against us by England during our struggle for national existence. Of money we have plenty, but much as we have we can ill afford to allow England to launch her piratical vessels upon our commerce, playing the part of Algiers, whenever we have any national trouble.

General Sheridan's Report.

From the N. Y. Times.

The report of General Sheridan on the conduct of affairs in the Indian Department, depicts more clearly the horrors of war than any document which we remember to have read since the Rebellion began. Its whole tone and manner continually remind one of Sherman's forcible expressions:—"War is cruelty—you cannot refine it." And the most painful part of it is not the plain, unvarnished, and brief narrative of massacres, but the explanation of how conflicting authorities and speculating officials deluded trusting settlers to their ruin, and betrayed the deep-laid plans of the military. The cruelty of the Indians is overshadowed by the more inhuman, though, perhaps, less culpable, desert of the Indian agents and Peace Commissioners. "All confidence is destroyed. The people had had some degree of security from the assurances of the Peace Commissioners, and many of them have met a horrible fate in consequence." The faithlessness of the ignorant Indians is forgotten, when we read Sheridan's description of the result of the mismanagement of our more unscrupulous agents. The ninety-two dead Indians, slain since the war reopened, are forgotten when we reflect that eighty-six whites have been sacrificed by the same mismanagement. "There are too many fingers in the pie, too many hands to be sucking, and too much money to be made, and it is the interest of the nation and humanity to put an end to this inhuman traffic." The Peace Commission and the Indian Department, and the military and the Justice, make a "balky team." The public Treasury is depleted, and innocent people murdered in the attempt to manage a management in which the public Treasury and the unarmed settlers are the greatest sufferers.

Corn Exchange Bag Manufacture.

From the N. Y. Times.

It is the most horrible feature of all wars, that not the actual combatants, but the innocent, trusting, and deluded non-participants, must suffer most. General Sheridan's report is a powerful protest against the longer continuance of a system of Indian warfare and Indian government which is opposed to all the interests of the West, and in violation of all reason as well as humanity. For years we have disbursed, through dishonest agents, immense tributes to insignificant tribes, in order to secure a peace we had no reliance upon; and as an additional security of this distracted peace, have maintained at enormous expense a large army, totally incapable, by reason of its peculiar organization and equipment, of carrying on an effective offensive campaign, or of defending any other settlers than those located immediately under the guns of the established forts and posts. No part of our generally con-

templible civil service has been so badly managed as our Indian affairs; and since the army must occupy the disputed country, and since only force will keep the Indians in control, it is a high time the civil department surrendered the duty it cannot perform to the department to which it naturally belongs. General Grant knows the true value of the opinions of such practical men as Sherman and Sheridan, and he will not be long in inaugurating this much needed reform.

Jeff. Davis in a New Role.

From the N. Y. Herald.

It is known that Jeff. Davis has professed to be pious for some time past, and it is said his piety increased in proportion to the waning fortunes of the Rebel cause. We now begin to see the fruits of his Scripture studies. He has been lecturing in England on Jerusalem, and is very anxious to have that ancient city explored. He flattered his audience by saying that Englishmen were peculiarly fitted for the task of exploring Jerusalem, but we do not know why they are so. The Rebel chief is preparing to become an Englishman, perhaps, and trying to lecture himself into the heart of John Bull. The British had a great regard for him at one time, but, he being a fallen hero, their affection has probably declined. Having sympathized with him in his "lost cause," they might make up a purse to send him to Jerusalem, there to end his days and atone for his sins at the foot of the Holy Sepulchre.

The Organists After Grant.

From the N. Y. Herald.

The Republican organists are after Grant. It is whispered that Thurlow Weed is about to see the Washington Weekly ring organ, with the object of making it the official mouth-piece of the new administration, and the curious biography of the old lobby fox which appeared in the columns of that journal a few days ago gives color to the rumor. Report associates Raymond with the venture, and his positive denial of its truth is calculated rather to strengthen its reliability. At all events, the gossip has terribly alarmed Greeley, who comes out with an open bid for the position, and offers his Washington bureau to Grant for all the purposes of a party organ. We incline to the belief that General Grant will be his own organist, and that Weed, Raymond, Greeley, and all the rest of the political adventurers will be puzzled to find out what tune he intends to play.

Newspapers in Schools.

From the N. Y. Tribune.

It is said—but how shall we believe it?—that the school officers of Philadelphia have resolved to substitute newspapers for the reading books now used in the public schools, and that many intelligent people approve of the plan. It is claimed that such a course of study would interest and improve the youthful mind, which is apt to grow weary of the history of wars that ended hundreds of years ago, and of kings whose tombs are unknown. "Congressional debates, State affairs, wars and their causes, accidents, floods, and fires, great public improvements," are we told, "are subjects upon which the youthful mind will feed much more profitably than upon beautiful orations or pathetic fancy writing." This is hard on Cicero and Irving, but very good for Marble and Brick Pomeroy.

Y. P. M.

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