

SPRIT OF THE PRESS.

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

The Luck of Mr. McMullin.

From the N. Y. Tribune. Republics may be ungrateful, but the Moyamensing Hose Company and other friends of Alderman McMullin of Philadelphia are not open to the accusation. What the generous McMullin has done for the Moyamensing Hose Company and its friends we do not know, but what the Hose gentlemen have just done for Mr. McMullin is of record. Last Monday night, at the Academy of Music, he presented the lucky Alderman with a choice variety of valuable gifts. Imprimis, there was a shirt-pin for the Alderman's snowy fronts, a diamond pin of the estimated value of two thousand five hundred dollars. There was a gold box for the Alderman's tobacco, ever so many carats fine, and gleaming also with diamonds, the whole being valued at fifteen hundred dollars. Finally, there was a superbly embroidered diploma "in a frame of gold and red velvet," with a portrait of the Alderman at the top, and with a complete exposition of his public and private excellence. This, of course, Mr. McMullin will value much more highly than the breast-pin and the tobacco-box. The jewel may pass from the family thesaurus. The executors of McMullin may dispose of the receptacle for fine-out. But the diploma, having no money value, albeit of moral priceless value, will remain an heirloom in the McMullin family, and will be displayed with pride upon the walls of his latest descendant. Future McMullins will look at it with tears in their eyes, and will wish they had the breast-pin and the tobacco-box also.

We do not say that the Alderman has not merited these tokens of the approbation of his fellow-creatures; but still we consider him to be, in some respects, a fortunate man. The valor displayed by him in that peculiar species of combat which is sometimes, though rarely, called "a man's" far be it from us to dispute! The strength of constitution exhibited by him, under the trying ordeal of "drunk all round," it would be vain for us to question. But how many others have valiantly fought, how many others have magnificently imbibed, without receiving even a diploma? There is many a McMullin, in all but name, who carries no costly diamond in his frontal line. There is many a McMullin, in all but name, who takes his fine-out from his native foil! There is many a McMullin lacking brilliant opportunity, who will transmit to posterity no illuminated certificate of public and private virtue! So goes the world! Some have the silver spoons and some the wooden ones; some have golden boxes and some no boxes at all for their tobacco; some receive a certificate of character from the Moyamensing Hose Company, and some a commitment only to Moyamensing Prison! Some expire and are forgotten, and some achieve the undying fame of a William McMullin!

Presentations like that which we have recorded not only raise our ideas of the dignity of public service, which are apt to get a little low and skeptical, but they may also be considered from an economical point of view. We wish that some general plan of this kind might be introduced in this city. To every Alderman who could prove that in office he had stolen nothing at all, a diamond-pin; to every Alderman who could prove that he had stolen moderately, a gold tobacco-box; to every Alderman who could prove that he stood the lowest on the list of penitentiaries, a diploma! Why shouldn't we have these prizes for virtue? These certificates of moderation? And if we should introduce them, who knows but we might have Aldermen as wise, pure, clean-handed, disinterested, peaceable, and altogether lovely as McMullin? Why should Philadelphia have the monopoly of such a municipal ornament? Why should we not regulate if possible the mysteries and the miseries of penitentiary?

Prepayment of Interest on the Public Debt.

From the N. Y. Herald. Our national legislators are so absorbed in party political matters and about the spoils that they forget what laws have been passed. The Senate, for example, spend a good deal of time in preparing and getting through a bill to authorize the prepayment of interest on the public debt, and now, when this bill has been sent to the House, the discovery is made all at once that a law for the same purpose was enacted in March, 1864, and remains on the statute book. Many of the members of the present Congress helped to pass this law, yet they forgot the fact, though it is only five years since the law was passed. By this the Secretary of the Treasury is empowered to pay the interest on the public debt before it is due, by a period not exceeding one year, either with or without rebate of interest upon the coupons, as he may think proper, and he is authorized to sell gold in the Treasury for that purpose. This is not a bad use for the surplus gold in the Treasury to be applied to, if the rebate of interest be made for the time it is anticipated. It would be a saving of something. But it would be better if the large sum which continually lies idle in the Treasury, amounting in currency, perhaps, to a hundred and fifty millions, were to be applied to buying up the debt at market rates and while it is depreciated. This would not merely save some interest for the time being, but for all time to come, through the reduction and extinguishment of a part of the principal. But it is the misfortune of the country to have legislators and financial agents of small ideas, that are mere peddlers in every thing, and that know nothing beyond miserable, patchwork legislation.

Great Expectations.

From the N. Y. World. The Tribune says, "we expect a great deal from Mr. Boutwell, in his great office." We have no doubt of it, and we dare say the Tribune will get all its expectations. So we are not surprised to find the Tribune rejoicing over Boutwell. On the other hand the Post, which also "expected a great deal from Mr. Boutwell in his great office," has got nothing. So we are not surprised to find the Post bewailing the administration of President Grant as a failure. It is the old story of the relations who are named in the will and of the relations who are not named in the will.

The Tenure-of-Office Squabble.

From the N. Y. Times. There can be no doubt that the committee appointed by the House to manage the opposition to the Tenure-of-Office bill, in the conference with Senators, was cleverly over-reached, and that the bill as passed substantially affirms all for which the Senate has contended. The second section, as amended in the conference, does not in precise terms reinstate a suspended officer in his position. It provides only for his indefinite suspension, if the person appointed in his place be not confirmed by the Senate. The most that can be said in favor of those who opposed the pretensions of the Senate is that the second section of the bill

seems to qualify the first section, which makes the consent of the Senate essential to removal. Practically, however, we apprehend that the qualification amounts to little. For, though a President cannot remove an officer without the Senate, he might nominate another person to perform the duties of the suspended officer in the place of the person rejected by the Senate, and there can be no doubt that a scrupulous interpretation of the law would lead to the restoration of him whose removal the Senate may refuse to sanction. The idea of a perpetual suspension is not inconceivable, but it is so beset with complications that its application in any circumstances is undesirable and improbable.

It seems to us, then, that Mr. Butler, with all his antipathies, erred egregiously when he represented the change as equivalent to a triumph, and that Mr. Trumbull was justified by the language of the second section in representing the continued possession by the Senate of its checks upon the Executive in the matter of removal. Messrs. Davis and Hoar, lawyers of repute and friends of repeal, so construe the present position of the question, and they are undoubtedly right.

A Pretty Territorial Governor.

From the N. Y. World. James M. Ashley, of Toledo, represented the Tenth Congressional district of Ohio in five Congresses, ending with the Fortieth. He was the well-wisher of impeachment. Last November he invited Mr. Ashley to retire to private life, and sent a Democrat to Congress in his stead. But Ashley refuses to retire, and the Toledo Blade intimates that he aspires to be Governor of Montana Territory, which reminds us that, eight years ago, Ashley worked very hard to secure the Surveyorship of Colorado for his "Dear Case." To Case he wrote from Washington, March 12, 1861:—"Now, Frank, this is the best office, in my judgment, in the gift of the President, and I would resign to-day if I was sure I could keep it four years. If you get it, I want to unite with you as a full partner in all land speculations and town sites."

To "Dear Case" he wrote again, March 18, 1861:—"I want to have an interest with you, if I get the place, in the city and town lot speculations; and further:—'I will probably be chairman of the Committee on Territories, if we can carry out the programme to elect Grow Speaker, and your brother, Charley Case, Clerk; and then I will know all the proposed expenditures in the Territories and post you in advance.'" And the anxious Ashley wrote yet again to "Dear Case" the next day, March 19, 1861:—"Now, if I get this, I want to be a full copartner with you in the purchase of all the real estate that you may make in the Territory. I have spent a good deal of time and some money to get this place, and if I do get it I hope you will go with me. I have drawn up the enclosed agreement, which I wish you would sign," etc.

State Prison Discipline.

From the N. Y. Times. Recent developments at the Sing Sing Prison prove that the management of that particular penal institution needs as thorough a reforming as do the criminals who are there confined. The frequent successful or unsuccessful attempts on the part of the inmates to escape; the grave charges of cruelty that have been lodged against the guards; the late murder of one prisoner by another, and the other reported improprieties connected with the administration of the establishment, point very plainly in one direction—that the internal machinery of the prison is most grievously out of order. To reclaim and reform criminals is now recognized by all civilized nations as the true end of punishment. How this object may most surely be attained is the absorbing theme of humanitarians everywhere; and, especially during the past twenty years, have experiments been tried with the view of mitigating the rigors of confinement, and inducting the most hardened offenders by easy steps into the ways of virtue. The nearest approach to a solution of this great problem of prison discipline has been reached in Ireland, where a system of graduated punishments, rewards and privileges has been for some years practiced with the most encouraging effects. This method, we are informed, is now sought to be introduced into the prisons of this country. Its adoption is urged upon the Legislature of this State by the Prison Association of New York—a society which has been twenty-four years in existence, and through the agency of which many marked improvements in the conduct of the prisons and treatment of criminals have been effected.

In spite, however, of the fact that during the period that has been named, the association has ceased the lash to be abolished, the diet to be improved, libraries to be furnished, instruction to be afforded, stimulants in the shape of rewards for good conduct to be offered, and other mitigating and elevating features to be introduced, a proper end of incarceration has been generally very nearly lost to view by the men who unfortunately are employed, in the important position of prison-keepers. Prison regulations of themselves, be they never so wise, will be always of no avail, unless their spirit shall be enforced by persons who have a special aptitude and liking for their work, and who combine firmness of purpose with humanity of heart.

Rejection of the Darien Canal Treaty by Colombia.

From the N. Y. Herald. We have before us the report of the Senate Committee of Foreign Relations of the Congress of Bogota against the treaty recently negotiated by Mr. Cushing with Colombia. On this report the Senate refused, on the 1st of March last, to confirm the treaty, and it is now void. The reasons for the rejection may be summed up in these three points:—First, that it does not sufficiently guarantee the sovereignty of Colombia; second, that the pecuniary advantages to Colombia are not sufficient; third, that the works should accrue to Colombia at the end of one hundred years, whether the constructors have received pay for them or not.

For our part we rejoice that this treaty has been rejected. It started out with the recognition of a principle which is repugnant to international law, in conflict with the spirit of the nineteenth century, and an outrage upon the great present and prospective interests of the commerce of the United States. We allude to the recognition of the claim of territorial sovereignty and without even the necessary conquest and possession, is entitled to the right to tax all commerce that may hereafter pass through the Isthmus. It is to be hoped that our Government, openly and frankly admitting the errors which former administrations have committed in recognizing this claim, will now inform the Government of Colombia that it will recognize no such robber principle, and if it refuses to permit a canal to be cut it must take the logical consequence that follow such refusal. The only way to treat a dog in a manger is to put him out.

Barbarities in Cuba—The Report of the Committee of the House.

From the N. Y. Herald. Every mail from Havana continues to bring accounts of the terrible barbarities perpetrated there, many of them too horrible to commit to public print. Both parties have for some time been committed to what is now called the retaliatory practice of shooting all prisoners, although it is evident that it was first begun by the Spaniards. Such has too often been the practice in the countries south of us, and it has become a general belief that it is an indispensable feature of their race. The proclamation issued by General Céspedes in January last fully relieves the republican government in Cuba from this accusation. In that document the Cuban leader details the correspondence he had with Brigadier Muñoz in December, then commanding the Spanish forces in Santiago, and expressly states his wish that the war should be carried on more in accordance with modern practices. The Spanish commander having treated his demand with contumely and persisted in his cruel practices, the Cuban General was forced, in self-defense, to adopt the same policy and to decree reprisal in its most ample terms. This state of things is a disgrace to a nation calling itself civilized, and a shame to the age in which it is practiced. The passage of the resolution reported on Thursday by the House Committee on Foreign Affairs at Washington will exercise some influence in this matter; and the knowledge by the Spanish volunteers, who now control the policy of the colonial government in Cuba, that the people and Government of the United States will not look unmoved upon these barbarities, will have a good effect. Let Congress do its part towards stopping these horrid practices by passing at once the resolution agreed upon by the House committee, and we will trust to General Grant what further action may be necessary in the matter.

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LEGAL NOTICES.

IN THE ORPHANS' COURT FOR THE CITY AND COUNTY OF PHILADELPHIA. Estate of ELIZA E. WILKES, deceased. The Auditor appointed by the Court to audit, settle, and adjust the account of JAMES HOLLIVAN and WILLIAM VODGES, executors of the last will and testament of ELIZA E. WILKES, deceased, and to report distribution of the balance in the hands of the accountants, will meet the parties interested for the purpose of his appointment, on MONDAY, April 5, 1869, at 10 o'clock A. M., at the office of E. M. PHILLIPS, Esq., No. 140 B. SIXTH Street, in the city of Philadelphia. WM. KNIGHT SHRYVE, Auditor. 25 1/2

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They were subjected to the most intense heat, and it affords us much pleasure to inform you that after recovering them from the ruins, we found upon examination that our books, papers, and other valuables were all in perfect condition. Yours, very respectfully, JAS. E. CALDWELL & CO.

THE ONLY SAFES EXPOSED TO THE FIRE IN CALDWELL'S STORE WERE FARREL, HERRING & CO.

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STILL ANOTHER. PHILADELPHIA, Jan. 18, 1869. Messrs. FARREL, HERRING & CO., No. 629 Chestnut Street.

Gentlemen—I had one of your make of safes in the basement of J. E. Caldwell & Co.'s store at the time of the great fire on the night of the 18th instant. It was removed from the ruins to-day, and on opening it I found all my books, papers, greenbacks, watches, and watch materials, etc., all preserved. I feel glad that I had one of your truly valuable safes, and shall want another of your make when I get located. Yours, very respectfully, F. L. KIRKPATRICK, With J. E. Caldwell & Co., No. 519 Chestnut Street.

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COOFISH.

U. S. PATENT OFFICE, WASHINGTON, D. C. March 2, 1869. W. D. CUTLER, Esq.—Please find below a communication from the Examiner, in the matter of interference between Rand, Lewis, and Cutler, for manufacture of Coofish. Very respectfully, ELISHA FOOTE, Commissioner of Patents.

EXAMINER'S ROOM: In the matter above referred to, priority of invention is AWARDED TO CUTLER, and the applications of Rand and Lewis are rejected. This establishes the patent under which the BOSTON AND PHILADELPHIA SALT FISH COMPANY, No. 281 CALIFORNIA Avenue, manufacture their DECATIZED COOFISH. For sale by all good Grocers.

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