

SPIRIT OF THE PRESS.

Editorial Opinions of the Leading Journals Upon Current Topics—Compiled Every Day for the Evening Telegraph.

WHO CAN MAKE BINDING AGREEMENTS IN BEHALF OF FREE CUBA?

Our proposition that Spain advance a step beyond the suggestion of Castelar, in the Cortes, and give independence to the Cuban colonies—by, in turn, making the pecuniary stipulations in payment for the public property of Spain on the island—has produced a result which we foresee and intended. It has promoted inquiry among reflecting journalists whether there be any existing power or organization in Cuba competent to speak and act in the matter in behalf of the inhabitants. The New Orleans Picayune, commenting on the proposition of the World, makes the following pertinent suggestions:—

"Spain may be willing to sell Cuba to the Cubans, but who are the Cubans? There must be some authority competent to buy, and with power to pledge the consent of a people, and with the means of redeeming that pledge. There is nothing in the present condition of the island to show that there is such authority among the inhabitants that the concession of independence would find them in a frame of mind towards each other to create a new government that would go peacefully into operation. There are internal factions raging, and it is not to be assumed, as a matter of course, that they will drop all animosities at the moment when they are left free from external pressure to contend for the mastery among themselves. With which of these factions will Spain treat, and what chance is there that, if she is willing to treat, she can find a government competent to contract, or, after contracting, to administer the island with that degree of peace and good order which is necessary for the fulfillment of obligations, and is, in fact, the humane end for which the proposition for sale is advanced and recommended?"

"If these difficulties could be removed or provided for, and a sale of Cuba effected, with the reasonable certainty that it would be the end of strife and opening of a career of peace in the island, and, if it failed, it were believed that the United States do not recommend the sale, and that the Cubans would throw themselves on the protection of the United States for relief, then Spain might be disposed at once to close with the propositions and leave the Cubans to work out their own ends as best they may. Perhaps, in consideration of the manifold and opportune advantages to herself, she may be willing to take the money and assume from them all contemplation of the consequences. But even in that event, it is a very serious question for the United States, whether she should not be content with the embarrassing consequences that are to follow. It is something to be thought of with a great deal of deliberation."

These are some of the perils of free Cuba to which we alluded, a day or two ago, as coming to the surface here in the quarrel between Mr. Leemis and Mr. McKim; but it is a fact that an overwhelming majority of the inhabitants of the island (excluding the Africans) desire to be completely rid of Spanish control, and that is their most political thought, we think the perils may be practically avoided. If, on the other hand, it be true that, by reason of the existence of irreconcilable factions amongst the colonists, or for any other cause, there is not and cannot be at present on the island any power representing the people which is competent to receive from Spain the boon of political freedom, do acts necessary to secure it, and maintain in the future a liberty protected by law, then our plan cannot be carried out, even if the governments at Madrid and Washington consent and co-operate.

The view of the Picayune necessitates a serious consideration of the pretensions of Cespedes and his so-called insurgent government. Whom and what does it in fact represent? Can it be made the nucleus of a governing body competent to contract, or, after contracting, to administer the island with that degree of peace and good order which is necessary for the fulfillment of obligations, and is, in fact, the humane end for which the proposition for sale is advanced and recommended? If it cannot, then the popular emotion in the United States in respect to the existing condition of the island, with all his allies or supporters, is an idle, aimless, wicked disturber of the public peace and tranquillity; and it would be an outrage for the United States to accord to him a belligerent status. Thus far, to be sure, there has been little evidence as to when and how political power was, by popular consent of those concerned, given to the Cespedes government, and as to the manner in which it has been exercised. Even the locality of the new government is not clearly established. We have statements of forty thousand men being under his command, but no explanation of where they are making military operations. Certain it is that they have fought no battles where the record of killed or wounded on either side would indicate an engagement of magnitude. Neither have the insurgents captured any considerable town, nor do they hold free any considerable island, or, in short, they are now wanting in most of the elements which, in the domain of international law or according to the precedents the United States has established, would justify this nation in recognizing them as a de facto belligerent State. But, notwithstanding all this, we have been under the impression that there was on the island a repressed condition of feeling and opinion which, on proper mediation of the United States with Spain, would quickly spring up, organize, and demonstrate its competency to assume and meet all obligations necessary for a new government.

WHAT SHALL WE DO WITH OUR CRIMINALS?

From the N. Y. Tribune.

It is a grave question. Forty-six thousand four hundred and seventy-six commitments in New York city alone tell a dark tale; and how many in the land beside? The twenty-fourth "Report of the Prison Association of New York" states that some fifteen thousand human beings are confined in our State prisons for grave crimes. What are we to do with these armies of men who form a distinct society? The old fashion was to hang them, kill them, get them out of the way—and their places were quickly filled. The natural man was not only at enmity with God, but he loved to hunt his fellow-man. Twice have we witnessed this human hunt driving on—men tracking the criminal as if they were hounds and he a beast; ferocity was on every face, and the quiet blood of quiet country folk was hot as that of the slenthound. This old ferocity is not quite allayed; the hunter instinct is not altogether suppressed; we do not like to be seen flocking to a hanging now as to a banquet, yet we hate the criminal more than the crime.

But the world moves: we get what consolation we can out of that. It moves, and this "Report" proves it. We find that, in every State, great, melancholy, some palaces have been built for our criminals, in which we give them decent places to sleep, decent food, to eat, and mostly decent clothes to wear, and we set them to work to support themselves. In some cases, too, we try to reform them, and give them a desire for an honest life. We thus begin to recognize that they are human, not devilish. But we forbid them to speak; they cannot open their mouths to make a sound from year's end to year's end, day or night, summer or winter. Think of it, you man who are a talking creature—try it for a week or a day! One man in the Ohio Penitentiary has been living so, or dying so, for over twenty years, and he is an imbecile, of course. "Better an imbecile than a murderer," you say. So do we, if that is the choice. But is it? In the present system of Tennessee the criminal is allowed "Sunday liberty"—that is, on Sunday he may "talk, sing, write letters, read books, or walk about the yard"—and, strange to say, it makes him better; it is his "aid, not a hindrance, to discipline," so his keepers say. Will it not do to try this a little further? After all, the criminal may be human.

Again: the lash seems to be given up in all the State prisons, but in Kentucky and Iowa; and the best superintendents say it is imperative that "our system shall not degrade men in their own esteem by harsh and rigid discipline." It strikes us that nothing is likely to be more degrading to a man than to have his naked back cut and slashed with a whip, unless it be to be forced to cut and slash another man's back with a whip. Have pity upon your *wardens*, O Kentucky! O Iowa! if not upon your criminals! "Kind and intelligent discipline" is the only mode which has the ghost of a chance to reform a fallen man. So all the great superintendents agree—such men as Brockway of Michigan, and Pillsbury of Connecticut, and Lee of South Carolina, and McElwee of Tennessee, and Haines of Massachusetts, and Wardwell of Virginia. These are wise, able, thorough men, and years of experience have proved to them that it will do to treat criminals as men, not as beasts. If, therefore, we must have criminals, let us be decent at least.

establishments cost almost as much as the entire gross amount of the aggregate value of imports and exports—namely, about \$20,000. In Japan, with a trade of \$1,500,000, we pay upward of \$25,000 to our official representatives. In Mohammedan countries we pay \$61,000 for official agents, with a trade of only \$2,000,000. In Portugal, \$28,000, with a trade of \$500,000; in Denmark, \$29,000, with a trade of \$1,200,000. In Peru we pay \$25,000, the same amount we pay in Cuba, though with the former country the trade amounts only to \$700,000, and with the latter to nearly \$40,000,000. It is well said in the Congressional report that "such a system impoverishes the people by abstracting from their pockets many hundreds of thousands of dollars, to be lavished upon ministers who attend to the tailcoats among the Patagonians, while trade which might enrich our people slips from our hands and passes to other markets of the world."

These and similar facts disclosed in the report that has been submitted to the Senate by the Joint Committee on Retrenchment, go far to corroborate the opinion which we have repeatedly expressed in regard to the worthlessness of our diplomatic and consular system. We fully agree with the committee in its opinion that "other considerations besides commerce are certainly worthy of attention in connection with foreign countries." But we agree with it still more thoroughly in its additional statement that "commercial intercourse affords one of the most practicable means of testing the efficiency of the foreign service, and the value which it yields as compared with the expenditure which it involves."

Regarding as we do our diplomatic and consular system as a miserable failure, so far as the promotion of national interests is concerned, and entertaining but little hope of a change for the better, we think it is time for our merchants, through their regular Chambers of Commerce, to devise means for the improvement of our commerce and navigation. They may take for granted that nothing of the kind will ever be done under our present system of representation in foreign countries. We are a great nation only in imagination so long as we do not possess our full share of the commerce and enterprise of the globe. Previous to and during the war we were all absorbed by the slavery question, and the financial speculations since the restoration of peace have been rather turned into the channel of local operations than towards commerce, industry, and navigation.

That a change is necessary in this direction, in order to vindicate our claims as a commercial and enterprising people, must be obvious to the careful observer of our national vicissitudes. But since the impulse which is given in Europe to foreign commerce and navigation by able and industrious officials is not vouchsafed to our people, it behooves our Chambers of Commerce to take hold of this vast subject, and we know of no public bodies in our country who could do justice to it more effectively. These organizations in our principal cities are composed of our most distinguished merchants and ship-owners. No one can excel them in practical experience and genius for elucidating this question, and for taking measures that may restore prosperity to our mercantile enterprise. The zeal displayed by ministers of commerce in Europe might be advantageously emulated by our mercantile chambers, with the invaluable difference that the energy of the individual citizens would prove far more effective than the costly machinery of governmental direction, and give at the same time a startling lesson to the supineness of the administration and its host of do-nothings.

But the world moves: we get what consolation we can out of that. It moves, and this "Report" proves it. We find that, in every State, great, melancholy, some palaces have been built for our criminals, in which we give them decent places to sleep, decent food, to eat, and mostly decent clothes to wear, and we set them to work to support themselves. In some cases, too, we try to reform them, and give them a desire for an honest life. We thus begin to recognize that they are human, not devilish. But we forbid them to speak; they cannot open their mouths to make a sound from year's end to year's end, day or night, summer or winter. Think of it, you man who are a talking creature—try it for a week or a day! One man in the Ohio Penitentiary has been living so, or dying so, for over twenty years, and he is an imbecile, of course. "Better an imbecile than a murderer," you say. So do we, if that is the choice. But is it? In the present system of Tennessee the criminal is allowed "Sunday liberty"—that is, on Sunday he may "talk, sing, write letters, read books, or walk about the yard"—and, strange to say, it makes him better; it is his "aid, not a hindrance, to discipline," so his keepers say. Will it not do to try this a little further? After all, the criminal may be human.

IS BOUTWELL MUTINOUS?

From the N. Y. Commercial Advertiser.

Has the administration a policy? If so, what is the policy? Does Secretary Boutwell represent General Grant and the administration in favoring the election of Stokes as Governor of Tennessee? If the Cabinet is not a unit on Tennessee, it is not the part of wisdom for Secretary Boutwell to interfere in a family quarrel. It may be wisdom in the judgment of the Secretary to aid in dividing and distracting the party—but our judgment would counsel otherwise. If the President favors non-intervention in Tennessee divisions, as he did in Virginia, Mr. Boutwell has committed an error, an unpardonable blunder, and an act of insubordination deserving of the severest punishment. Mr. Boutwell may have convictions that Stokes is a patriot, and Senter a Copperhead and Rebel; but if General Grant and the Cabinet think otherwise, it is unwise, it is impolitic to volunteer a stump speech in behalf of Stokes—a speech, too, which more becomes a ward spouter than a statesman and the Secretary of the Treasury. It may be that we are doing the Secretary injustice, if he may be speaking by command of the President. What we certainly do know is that the people are in doubt as to the position of General Grant and his Cabinet on the Tennessee wrangle. It would be a great relief to the country if the administration would define its policy. Keeping people in the dark may lead them into error. Let us have light.

But not only have these great managers done thus to the criminal: they have also made reckless men work and pay all their expenses, and also make a profit for the tax-payers of their States. What do you suppose it costs in the Ohio Penitentiary to feed (and feed well), and bed, and clothe, and doctor a criminal man a year? Simply \$51.37. And now, virtuous man, be of good courage—\$51.37 can be made to pay all your expenses, except housing. Who needs be poor, if he will be economical? In some quarters has come up a senseless cry that these criminals must not be allowed to work, lest they may injure some virtuous workman. It is senseless, of course, and will die away.

We here ask attention to one great evil which must be corrected. Men like those we have named, who have devoted life, thought, and energy to this important work, must be sustained in it by all good men—by all who pay taxes, and all do. As it is and has been, they have been subject to the whims of popular elections, and held their positions only like politicians. This should everywhere be changed; and they should hold their places not only for their own good, but should be urged to hold them for our good and that of the criminal man. Now bear in mind that the draft of our new Constitution, to be voted upon in November, contains a provision to place the charge of our prisons in the hands of a competent board to be appointed by the Governor and Senate. This, and this only, will secure us the services of our best men in these positions. It is so necessary, so wise, so vital, that we shall hope for its unanimous acceptance.

THE DEMOCRATIC PARTY AND FREE TRADE.

From the N. Y. Times.

The Democratic journals insist that free trade shall be treated as a political question, and, above all, as a Democratic question. They have no respect for the suggestion that financial and fiscal matters should be discussed on their merits, irrespective of their bearing on the fortunes of this or that party. Free trade is political, they say—free trade is Democratic; and any effort to separate it from partisanship they ascribe to the Republican enemy.

How is it, then, that of the Democratic conventions that have been recently held not one has made free trade a part of its platform? All of them talk about reducing the burdens on industry and revising and amending the system of taxation; but further than this they have not ventured. They have not declared free trade to be a Democratic question. They have not identified themselves or their party with the policy which their own journals parade as essentially Democratic. Are we to accept the fact as evidence that, after all, free trade is not a generally received article of the Democratic creed, or as an admission that the country is not ripe for the promulgation of a free trade program?

We regard the extreme caution of the Democratic managers on this subject as testimony to the popular strength of the movement for practical revenue reform which has been largely aided by the reports of Commissioner Wells, and which has its most effective champions in the Republican ranks. In this estimate of the situation the Democratic conventions concede not a little. They virtually abandon the pretense that the present tariff is a party measure, and confess that the method of reform proposed by Mr. Wells and prominent Republicans is that which best commends itself to the judgment of the people. The monopolists have friends in both parties.

"THE DOG STAR RAGES."

From the N. Y. Herald.

If the evidence were wanted to prove that we are in the midst of the season when the "Dog Star rages," it will only be necessary to refer to the catalogue of hot-tempered occurrences that have occupied the columns of the newspapers for the past few days. Here are a few of them—The religious rows and muddles in Chicago; the fight and scuffle for the spoils of the Charleston Custom House; the bloody political fights in Barnwell and Charleston, S. C.; the murderous freaks of a madman in New Jersey, who, it seems, is in the habit of having these amiable spells at this time of the year, which fact being known, by the way, it is strange the mania's friends did not take care of him. Then we have had and still have the fight among the Republicans in the interior of this State against the dictation of the New York city radical rings; the rancorous political campaign in Tennessee; the rows and riotings among the Massachusetts Republicans in regard to the prohibitory liquor law; railroad accidents, shocking murders, and brutal hangings have been as plenty as blackberries in August; and, finally, we have just had a revival of the old anti-ent feudals in the shooting of several county officers while in the performance of their official duty. Verily, if all these things are not enough to make the everyday readers, as well as editors, reporters, correspondents, and all others connected with newspapers, perspire at every pore, there is no use in having hot times physically, mentally, socially, morally, politically, financially, or religiously. The most prominent peaceful event of the past few days is that grand achievement of science, the successful landing of the Franco-American cable on our shores. That event is a great victory of peace, and signally demonstrates that peace hath indeed her victories no less renowned than war. We warn all high-tempered people to keep their passions in check at least until the reign of the Dog Star is passed and gone.

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SECRETARY ROBESON'S OPPORTUNITY.

From the N. Y. Times.

It is clear that what was ex-Secretary Robeson's mishap is Secretary Robeson's opportunity. One step, one order, of the latter, would make him not only famous, but the subject of the most grateful eulogy from Maine to Minnesota. But the great trouble is that the opportunity is itself one which Secretary Robeson cannot, apparently, improve. It is rare to find a public man who with a single dash of the pen can make himself illustrious; it is rarer still to find one who, in Secretary Robeson's position, cannot afford to execute that stroke. His predecessor, during those short retentions of the naval portfolio more reforms were consummated (thanks to Admiral Porter) than ever before in the same space of time, yet made one great misstep in his onslaught upon the "Indian names" of the navy; for this historians, antiquarians, editors, lecturers, and legislators have come down upon him. All this his successor sees, and yet he does not withdraw the order. The reason, doubtless, is that Admiral Porter originally suggested the change, and now maintains it. Hence State legislatures, beginning with Maine, New Hampshire, and so on, will protest, and feel outraged, in vain. Already, the other day, we noted in the naval news, what was doing with the "Terror, late Agamemnon," and soon not even this double nomenclature will be maintained. Here, then, appears to be a case of a good opportunity for popularity which is not likely to be improved.

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UNITED STATES HOTEL, ATLANTIC CITY, N. J. Now Open for the Reception of Guests. HASSLER'S BAND, under the direction of Simon Hassler, is engaged for the season. Persons wishing to engage rooms will apply to GEORGE FREEMAN, Superintendent, ATLANTIC CITY, or BROWN & WOELPPER, 65 2m No. 227 RICHMOND Street, Philadelphia. SURF HOUSE, ATLANTIC CITY, N. J. IS NOW OPEN FOR GUESTS. TERMS MODERATE. For rooms, terms, &c., address THOMAS FARLEY, Proprietor. Carl Bent's Parlor Orchestra has been engaged for the season. 6 12m

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located on Massachusetts avenue, is now open for the reception of visitors. The bathing opposite the house is UNSUPERSED, and THE BATHERS ARE SECURE FROM DANGER BY THE "SAFETY FLOATS" ENCLOSING THE BATHING GROUNDS! Apply to WILLIAM WHITEHOUSE, 7 2 2m

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Having enlarged the Hotel, and beautified it with a Mansard roof, the Proprietor takes pleasure in announcing that he has opened the same for the reception of guests, and is returning thanks to the public for past patronage, he respectfully solicits a continuance of the same, pledging himself to furnish all his boarders with all the accommodations of a First-Class Hotel. Old stock Ale and choice Liquors and Wines served upon call. 6 23 2m

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Corner Atlantic and Delaware Avenues, opposite the United States Hotel. To those seeking comfort and pleasure this house has, in its delightful shade and eligible location, advantages seldom found on the seashore. M. J. JOY, Proprietor.

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EVARD HOUSE, ATLANTIC CITY, N. J.

(Pennsylvania Avenue, between Atlantic and Arctic) is now open for the reception of guests. T. F. WATSON, Proprietor.

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GEORGE W. HINKLE, Proprietor. Now open for the season. It has been thoroughly renovated and put into complete order. In connection with the bathing there are new bath-houses, and Captain W. Tall Street's life lines and rings introduced for the special use of the boarders.

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is now open. The location of this house only one hundred feet from perfectly safe and excellent bathing, together with its corner as a First-Class Hotel, make it a most desirable stopping place. For terms, apply at the Hotel, or at No. 107 RICHMOND STREET, PHILADELPHIA. ROBERT L. FUREY, Lessee.

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(Next door to United States Hotel). CHARLES SOUDER, M. D., Proprietor. KENTUCKY HOUSE, ATLANTIC CITY, N. J. is now open for the reception of guests. MRS. M. QUIGLEY, Proprietor.

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THE CHALFONTE, ATLANTIC CITY, N. J.

is now open for the reception of guests. ELISHA ROBERTS, Proprietor. HEWITT HOUSE, ATLANTIC CITY, N. J. will open July 1, and will be kept as formerly. A. T. HUBBARD, Proprietor.

MAGNOLIA COTTAGE, ATLANTIC CITY, N. J.

is now open for the reception of guests. A. F. COOKE, Proprietor. MANN'S COTTAGE, ATLANTIC CITY, N. J. (Pennsylvania Avenue), unexcelled as to location, comforts, conveniences, and the tempting of this house, is now open for visitors. G. C. THORP, Proprietor.

THE CLARENDON HOUSE, VIRGINIA AVENUE, ATLANTIC CITY, N. J.

is now open. JOSEPH JONES, Proprietor. THE ALHAMBRA, ATLANTIC CITY, N. J. is now open for the reception of guests. R. B. REEDS, Proprietor. CENTRAL HOUSE, ATLANTIC CITY, N. J. is now open for the reception of guests. LAWLOR & TRILLY, Proprietors. CHESTER COUNTY HOUSE, ATLANTIC CITY, N. J. J. KEIM, Proprietor. SEA-SIDE HOUSE, ATLANTIC CITY, N. J. is now open for the reception of guests. EVANS & HAINES, Proprietors. ALEXANDER G. CATTELL & CO., PRODUCE COMMISSION MERCHANTS, No. 22 NORTH WILKES STREET, PHILADELPHIA. 9 22 ALEXANDER G. CATTELL, ELIJAH CATTELL

SUMMER RESORTS. CAPE MAY.

SEWELL'S POINT FISH HOUSE. Cold Spring Inlet, Cape May, N. J. PLEASURE AND FISHING BOATS TO HIRE. Meals and Refreshments served at short notice, and the best attention paid to the wants of fishing parties and visitors to the Inlet generally. Wines, Liquors, Cigars, etc., of the choicest brands. H. W. FAWCETT, PROPRIETOR. 7 1 1m

COLUMBIA HOUSE, CAPE MAY, N. J.

Extensive alterations and additions, added to the great advantage in location which the Columbia possesses, in consequence of the tendency of Cape May improvements, enable us to promise our patrons more than ordinary satisfaction. For Rooms, etc., address GEORGE J. BOLTON, Proprietor. 6 15m 2m

WARNE'S BODEL COTTAGES

(Opposite the Stockton Hotel), CAPE MAY, N. J. A few apartments, with board, in these splendidly constructed Cottages, can be secured on immediate application at the Cottages to H. W. FAWCETT, 6 25 2m Proprietor.

SEA BATHING

This large and commodious Hotel, known as the National Hotel, is now receiving visitors. AARON GARRETTSON, Proprietor. 6 24 2m

CARLETT'S COTTAGE, JACKSON STREET, CAPE MAY, N. J.

is now open for the reception of guests. FRANCIS CARLETT, Proprietor. 6 25 2m

MERCHANTS' HOTEL, CAPE MAY, N. J.

This delightfully located hotel is now open for the season, and for the undersigned, as heretofore, will devote his