SPIRIT OF THE PRESS.

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

PRINCE NAPOLEON.

From the N. Y. Tribune.

Since the day when the cousin of his Majesty of France went off at a tangent to Ajaccio, and there uttered his warning against the blunder of subjugating Mexico and offending the United States, the oracle known as Prince Napoleon has been seldom heard aloud. It would be wonderful, however, if a Bonaparte could do as the Bourbons have done, and pass through a long silence without learning a great deal and forgetting nothing. Prince Plon-Plon, though content to seem an appendage to the Empire, is not a mere appurtenance of its Emperor. As the Bonapartes go, he is the best, and among Frenchmen eligible for rule and for public affairs, his position, character, and talents make him extraordinary. His sagacity at times has rendered him a very fair time-piece to the empire, only the minute-hand was too fast. He impersonates as much of conscience as can be entertained in blood relation to a French dynasty. The Prince is a thinker, a student, a man of some reveries and a few deeds. He careers about France now and then like a lame and lazy eagle. Seemingly he is a Bonaparte out of work, or an imperial cadet growing grey, though as yet but forty-seven years of age, and, as he himself says, almost the youngest member of the French Senate. The Prince has eccentricities, tastes, and accomplishments; he is an orator, and, more than that, he is a statesman. Were the Emperor, who may now be described as seriously recovered, lying at the point of death, perhaps the royal opportunity would arrive for this unemployed Bonaparte—a task of Regency in connection with a queen who is attached to her confessor, and who is supposed not to know how to govern.

We differ with those who treat the Prince's late speech as inadequate to the sensation it created. It was made to a body of conscript fogies to whom the Prince had the frankness, we will not say the boldness, to utter truths with which all but the Senatorial hirelings of his Majesty are familiar, but stimulating truths nevertheless. He argued in the face of some of their own fears that the Senatus Consultum was not an experiment, and announced that though liberty may be for a while eclipsed, it is the light to which all civilized nations tend; and perhaps it was with covert sarcasm that he hoped he might class France with civilized nations. He said that after Napoleon's return from Elba he was a thorough convert to constitutional principles, as, indeed, he should have been if he was not. "You will ruin pretenders," he said, "by granting liberty, but give them a chance if you withhold it;" and then the Prince uttered a sentiment which reminds us of his love of the fine arts:—"Liberty is cosmopolitan, it is human, it is like the beautiful in its unity." Opposition, he thinks, is the salt which gives savor to political food. A witty statesman once said that you may do anything with bayonets but sit down upon them; and the Prince adds:—"You may do anything with despotism except make it last!" He objects to a *plebiscitum*, believing that the Government has been more effective and expeditious in a Senatus Consultum. He construes the amnesty as a certain pledge for the future. He desires to see the Senate stripped of its excrescence of power and made a proper legislative body. Not being accustomed to deal tenderly with what he condemns, the Prince considers the institution of the Senatus Consultum as something ridiculous, and the fact that the Senate may act legislatively during a six months' prorogation of the Corps Legislatif, and even vote the budget, as simply monstrous. "This power is frightful," calmly observes the Prince. He proceeds to say that the Senate's exclusive privilege to discuss the Constitution—so plainly violated in the late interpellation of 116 deputies—ought to be abolished. He desires an increase in the number of deputies, and wants to see the circumscriptions fixed otherwise than by imperial decree, to the ruin of gerrymandering. Furthermore he thinks the Mayors should be elected by Municipal Councils, and quotes from a talk he had with a peasant in proof. "By and by," he says, "when, as inevitably must be the case, you come to discuss the repeal of the law of Public Safety, of Article 75 of the Constitution of the year VIII, of the administration of the city of Paris, of the relations between Church and State, and new laws on primary and gratuitous instruction, liberty of superior instruction, decentralization, individual liberty, and real economy, then the great battle will come." Thus much for the Prince's prospectus of reform, to which few Frenchmen will object on grounds of liberality. The Prince's best sentence is, we think, directed at the Emperor, and the phantom of responsibility. "The Emperor's responsibility is something vague and superior, high up in clouds and mists—I will not attempt to define it; abler men than I have renounced the task. As I have already said, his responsibility may show itself at a given moment by invoking a *plebiscitum*. But, besides this, the Emperor's responsibility is generous. I quite understand the feeling which leads him to cling to this responsibility. It is something superb, but not very palpable, and not very useful." Here is a fine cynicism, delicate as the blade of Saladin, and a proof positive that while the Prince can philosophically amuse himself at the expense of the empire, he knows how, while giving support to his dynasty, to retain the nicest shades of his individuality.

Since 1791, France has had eight Constitutions, and the last of them is now invaded by the promulgation of the Senatus Consultum. Viewing the failures of the other Constitutions, the Senators who share most the imperial doubts question whether they will be more successful this time. Prince Napoleon, who adds to his interest in his family something of personal independence and faith in the future, demands for France such a reform of the Constitution as will place it beyond the risk of timid and tardy tinkering. In a word, he would have France liberalized in her representative system to the level of England, and the Empire of authority transformed into the Empire of liberty. Then we suppose we shall have to salute the reigning chief of France, to use the early language of Prince Louis Napoleon, as "the Emperor of the French Republic." Can such things be?

THE AVONDALE DEAD.

From the N. Y. World.

The inquest upon the men smothered to death in the Avondale mine is at last over, and the jury have returned what everybody will regard as a righteous verdict.

It is at least consolatory to find that they do not give any countenance to the superfluous horror of the rumor which has lately been put afloat, that the fire by which these unfortunate men lost their lives was purposely kindled for their destruction by a jealous faction of men of the same calling. This story so atrocious and repulsive that, all things considered, it would be difficult to find a parallel to the depravity of the design it imputed to a body of miners to murder in gross a great company of their fellows for no other motive than that their existence was inconsistent with the interests of their murderers. "The fire," the jury say, and no doubt truly, "originated from the furnace in the mines taking effect on the wooden brettice" in the shaft. It is not difficult to trace the hideous rumor of murder to its proper source. The men who imagined it to their interest that such a story should be believed can have been no other than the men who were interested to divert responsibility before public opinion from their own misdeeds. Those men were the owners of the mine.

Even had the rumor referred to been as true as it has been authoritatively pronounced to be false, its truth would not relieve the owners of their amenability. It was their clear duty to take order that neither carelessness nor design could avail to destroy the men at work in their mine. The precautions they took against such an event are what we know. They not only neglected to provide an outlet for escape in case their single shaft should be obstructed, but they lined this single shaft with the most combustible material. A spark from the furnace or an incendiary's match could kindle it at any moment and at any point of the two hundred and thirty-seven feet of its length. A separate shaft would no doubt have been costly, but it would not have been costly enough to do more than diminish temporarily their great profits. And, while the second shaft was in abeyance, a small outlay would have sufficed to make the sole outlet much less dangerous than it was. One of the witnesses, a mining engineer, once employed in the Avondale mine, testified that he had "planned a continuous *brick* flue from the furnace to within about fifty feet of the surface." "But," he swears, "when I left it went into other hands, and they were satisfied with a wooden shaft." This proposition for a brick flue, which would have cost but a trifle compared with the total cost of working the mine, and which would have been a perfect protection against such a fire as has actually occurred, was refused on account of the cost of carrying it out; and the result is before the country in the case of the ghastly disaster of last week. If the single shaft which the parsimony of the company allowed had been properly protected, it would have guaranteed the inmates of the mine against arson or accident.

It is notable that every witness—even the stockholders and officers of the coal company—swears explicitly that "no mine is safe with a single opening," and every impartial expert swears in addition that the lost lives might have been saved with a second outlet. No human power can undo the deadly work which has already been done; but legislation is adequate to prevent its recurrence. There ought to be no delay in providing that no coal mine which has been worked sufficiently to allow of the sinking of a second shaft shall be worked any longer without one. And mines which have not been worked so far should be compelled to render their single shaft incombustible.

There need be no hesitation in placing the blame of this new "Wyoming massacre" where it belongs—upon the shoulders of the company which owned the Avondale mine. Corporations have no souls, but they have pockets, and if they are callous to the grief of widows and orphans of their making, and to the reproaches of an angry people, they are sensitive to pecuniary amercement for gross negligence of their officers. It may not be clear as a legal proposition that this company is liable in damages to every widow they have made. But their moral responsibility is clear enough; and, as a matter of prudence, it would be better for them to undertake the maintenance of the bereaved of Avondale than to face the destructive wrath of the men whose comrades have been done to death in their service.

ALABAMA CLAIMS AND MR. MOTLEY.

From the N. Y. Times.

The following telegram appeared in the *Evening Post* on Tuesday:—

"WASHINGTON, Sept. 14.—A recent letter from Minister Motley expresses dissatisfaction at the policy which he is instructed to pursue in regard to the Alabama claims. He writes that the temper of the British Ministry is decidedly favorable towards reopening the negotiations for the settlement of the question, and that if he was permitted to open up the subject again, the chances are that a treaty could be agreed upon alike satisfactory to both."

In view of the intimate relations subsisting between the Minister at London and Senator Sumner, and the announcement current in the press that Mr. Sumner was to preside at the approaching Republican Convention in Massachusetts, and then and there proposed to criticize Secretary Fish's mode of treating the Alabama claims, this despatch has naturally attracted some attention.

Before assuming that Mr. Motley has written such a letter, it may be wise to analyze the statement of the *Post's* correspondent, and see what it amounts to:—

1. The British Ministry would like to renew negotiations if Mr. Motley would take the initiative. That we knew before.

2. That Mr. Motley would like to renew negotiations. That we knew before he left Washington.

3. That Mr. Motley is dissatisfied with the restrictions of the State Department on this subject. That might fairly be presumed.

4. That if he "were permitted to open up the subject again, the chances are that a treaty could be agreed upon."

To make such a declaration privately or publicly presumes the existence of some understanding with the English Cabinet as to terms which, if Mr. Motley would propose, Mr. Gladstone would accept. It also presumes that terms which Mr. Motley thinks satisfactory the President does not think satisfactory, for he is represented as differing with the administration on that subject.

Now we can understand that Mr. Motley may feel impatient to try his hand at negotiating a settlement of our differences with England, but we are not prepared to believe that he is any less tenacious about the terms of settlement than the Government he represents, and if he is not, he could not be now complaining of their policy. This is the improbability number one.

Again, we believe it is no longer a State secret that Mr. Motley has been instructed to notify Lord Clarendon that whenever it is thought best to renew negotiations for a settlement of the Alabama claims, it will be done at Washington. It is not likely that in face of such instructions Mr. Motley would enter into *pourparlers* with the British Government, get terms of settlement which he thought well enough of to recommend to his Government, and then take an appeal from its decision to the country, because it would not authorize him to accept them, all of which must be presumed, if the statements of this telegram are accepted. This is improbability number two.

Again, it is, we believe, no indiscretion for us to say that the subject of the Alabama claims has been very recently the theme of an important correspondence between representative parties in England and this country, and the most favorable proposals which the English Government is supposed to be prepared to make were communicated, but they were not such proposals as the Government of the United States would entertain for a moment. It is not probable that Mr. Motley, up to this time, has been encouraged to expect any more acceptable terms than those from Mr. Gladstone. This is improbability number three.

We may add, as improbability number four, that Mr. Motley would hardly be so indiscreet as to place himself, at this early stage of his mission, in the attitude of deliberate hostility to the Government he represents, at least until it should appear that the country was suffering by that policy, of which, as yet, there can be no pretense. We are therefore constrained to doubt the existence of any letter from Mr. Motley which would bear the construction put upon it by the correspondent of our evening contemporary.

THE NEW CONSTITUTION—THE GOVERNMENT OF CITIES—A WORD TO DEMOCRATS.

From the N. Y. Sun.

The Democrats have complained very loudly of the government of the city of New York through the incessant interference of the Legislature, and especially by the creation of various boards of commissioners to administer its affairs. They now have an opportunity to remedy all this by adopting the new Constitution.

That instrument provides that general laws shall be passed by the Legislature, at its first session, for the organization and government of cities, and that no special act shall be passed for this purpose except when the object cannot be attained under general laws. This will prevent all that species of discriminating legislation in regard to this city and Brooklyn to which the Democracy have so long and so strenuously objected.

The Constitution also provides that not only Mayors but all city officers shall be chosen by the electors of cities, or be appointed by such city authorities as the Legislature shall designate. The authorities, however, who may be clothed with limited appointing powers, must themselves be chosen by the eleoters of the several cities. This provision, therefore, will prevent the creation by the Legislature of any special commissions for the city of New York. If commissions are created, it must be done under general laws, equally applicable to all the laws of the State; and even then the commissions must be chosen by the electors of the several cities, or be appointed by authorities chosen by those electors.

By the new Constitution, mayors are vested with much larger powers than the Mayor of this city now enjoys. According to its provisions, mayors are clothed with authority to see that the duties of all other city officers are faithfully performed; and for this purpose, they may investigate their acts, examine all their books, records, and documents, subject them and their subordinates to rigid inquiry under oath, and suspend or remove them from office for misconduct or neglect of duty.

All this is eminently just and proper; and we need hardly say that the bestowal of such authority upon the Mayor of New York, not to speak of other large cities, would amount to a revolution in our municipal government, and revive those earlier and better times when the Mayor was in fact, as well as in form, the Chief Magistrate of the metropolis of the Union.

The new Constitution, then, will commit the exclusive control of all the cities of the State to the electors thereof, to whom it properly belongs, The effect of this measure upon the politics of the State is obvious. The cities are the prolific fountains whence the Democratic party draws a large share of its strength. To place them completely under the control of Democratic authorities must operate to enhance the power and influence of that party, not merely in the cities themselves, but throughout the State. Viewing the question from the standpoint of the cities, therefore, it is clearly for the interest of the Democrats to see that the Constitution is adopted.

BEGINNING OF THE SOUTHERN PACIFIC RAILROAD.

From the N. Y. Herald.

Generals Rosecrans and Sedgwick were advertised in San Francisco to leave that city on the 12th instant for San Diego, the seaport at the southern extremity of the State of California, there to inaugurate the work on the San Diego and Gila Railroad, and Mr. Seward was also to be present to assist in the ceremonies of breaking ground. Funds sufficient to build the road to the Gila river have been subscribed. This is the beginning of the Southern continental railway line. A company, headed by General Fremont, has been organized East, to begin at Memphis, Tennessee, and thence to build a road southwestwardly, through Arkansas and Texas, to El Paso on the Rio Grande, thence across the tablelands to the Gila river, and down its valley, or near it, to a junction with this San Diego branch.

From the Mississippi river this is a much shorter route to the Pacific Ocean than that of the Union Pacific road; and as it flanks the Rocky Mountains and the Sierra Nevada chain, it may be built all the way over the Plains. It is also below the region of interrupting snows, and the work of building it and of running it when completed may be continued without the stoppage of a day from wintry storms. With anything like the enterprise which built the Union Pacific, this Southern road ought to be finished within two years, for there will be comparatively little to do in building it beyond marking out the line and laying the ties and rails. When finished it will be the main line for through travel; but there will be work enough, not only for the two continental roads, which will then be in operation, but for one or two more. In the building up of half a dozen new States the Union Pacific will soon be an immensely profitable line, and so with the Southern Pacific in tapping the undeveloped resources of Western Texas and of New Mexico, and Arizona, and of the Northern States of the Mexican republic, and the vine and olive lands of Southern California, the most productive in the world.

In this connection it will be seen that General Rosecrans is in better business than he would be in running as the Democratic candidate for Governor of Ohio. General Fremont, we believe, is now in Europe raising money for the main line from Memphis westward. He only asks the right of way and certain Territorial lands along the line from Congress; for with these and the liberal grants offered by Texas he calculates upon building the road without the further assistance of Government bonds. We think, too, that on this basis the road ought to be pushed through without difficulty, considering the advantages of the route, the lightness of the work, and the profits sure to follow.

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	Real Estate	$5,000·00
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