

SPIRIT OF THE PRESS.

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

RESPONSIBILITY FOR THE EXECUTION OF SPEAKMAN AND WYETH IN CUBA.

From the N. Y. World.

The readers of this journal will remember the earnestness with which, in the month of April last, we urged the administration at Washington to warn by a proclamation the thoughtless and unreflecting, and even the reflecting portion of the country, that President Grant would not countenance or encourage, but would discountenance and prevent, all movements within the United States of a hostile character, in respect to Cuba, on the part of those who, unmindful of their own and their country's fame, presumed thus to disregard the laws of the land and our treaty obligations. What we said then sufficiently displays our motive. We apprehended that the boyish utterances of Grant about "Free Cuba," the extravagant conduct of Rawlins, the witless blundering of Creswell on the same subject, and unmistakable manifestations of sympathy elsewhere, would make many persons think that the administration would wink at piratical schemes against Cuba, the result of which would expose our young men to the terribly quick and severe punishments which nations are prone to inflict on all who take insurrectionary part against the government. The administration refused to issue a proclamation, and the official correspondence respecting Cuba, lately transmitted to the Senate, gives the reasons therefor as assigned in a note to the Spanish Minister of April 17, 1869. This note bears, we think, evidence on its face of a reason, not assigned in the writing, which made the issue of such a proclamation an impossibility at that time. The reason was the willingness of the President to see acts done which the proclamation would tend to prevent. We do not accuse President Grant of a willingness to see the laws or treaty pledges set at defiance. His goodness then was such that he probably had no just perception of such matters, any more than he had of revenue matters when he made, or attempted to make, Mr. A. T. Stewart Secretary of the Treasury. The reasons for refusal given in the note are that when President Fillmore acted, in 1851, there were undisturbed peace and quiet on the island, but a threatened piratical movement from this country. In April last the attitude was reversed. There were rebellion and insurrection in the island, but no impending invasion from outside. Therefore, no need of a proclamation. And yet, in substance, the sentences of the note there is an admission that unlawful enterprises against Cuba, instigated by those engaged in the insurrection, may be undertaken, since such ventures "always and everywhere occur with the opportunity." Now, we submit that to reflecting and just President the existence of the great first cause of illegal enterprises from our shores—to wit, an insurrection in the island—would have been sufficient inducement for an effort to discourage the illegal acts on our own soil which were as sure to come as effect to follow cause. And so the result proved; for at about the very time the President was refusing the application of the Spanish Minister, an expedition was being organized in New York, which did set sail from this city, and ended most painfully for certain persons on board the vessel called the Grapeshot. We refer to the execution at Santiago de Cuba, June 17, 1869, by the Spanish authorities, of Speakman and Wyeth, for which we can but think the administration is in large degree responsible.

The facts respecting Speakman, as detailed in the official correspondence before us, are that he was a native of Aurora, Indiana, aged thirty-three years; that in New York, during the latter part of April, he shipped as sailor on the schooner Grapeshot, bound on an honest voyage (as he supposed) for Jamaica. He went on board at Hunter's Point, and in the lower harbor of New York the schooner took on board from a steam-tug fifty armed Cubans and munitions of war. He then first suspected a dishonest voyage, protested, and asked the captain to put him ashore in the tug; but the latter refused, insisting the schooner would go direct to Jamaica. When off the eastern end of Cuba, the Cubans took possession of the schooner and of the captain, who at last promised to run her to land at Balliquiri. This was done; and the men and cargo landed. Speakman wished to return to the schooner, but the captain ordered and put him ashore. The men moved inland; soon had an encounter with Spanish troops; their leader, Smith, was killed; and then the Cubans took to their heels, leaving a few Americans defenseless. Speakman declared, just before his execution, that when put ashore he had no gun, but picked up one, and, having never fired a shot, gave himself up soon after to two unarmed men he met. He was taken to Santiago de Cuba, subjected to a private examination before the Fiscal in presence of an interpreter, declared an enemy of Spain taken with arms in his hands, and, in conformity with the decree of Captain-General Dulce of March 24, 1869, was executed within fourteen hours. In a letter to his wife, written just before his execution, Speakman said the owners of the Grapeshot "have taken my life." He bids her find them out; get a "good lawyer;" he will prove a contract between the owners and the Cuban Junta to land the Cubans in Cuba, and then recover damages of the former. Speakman insisted that he did not embark against Cuba voluntarily, but was the victim of a collusion between the Junta and the Grapeshot.

On the same schooner was Wyeth, from this city, who was induced by Antonio A. Jimenez, the originator of the expedition under the Cuban Junta, to go to Falmouth, Jamaica, free of charge, for the benefit of his health. He was put ashore with Speakman, subsequently taken prisoner and executed. Now, a proclamation of warning from President Grant would very likely have arrested the attention of Speakman and Wyeth, and doubtless hundreds of other Americans, and thus prevented the Cuban Junta from deluding them to their terrible death in Cuba. In respect to the Grapeshot, it is believed she was subsequently wrecked and became a total loss; but nothing has ever been done by the administration to arraign and punish the captain or the owners, or the members of the Cuban Junta, for getting up and affording the means of a military expedition or enterprise against Cuba; and this, too, in the face of the living words of Speakman, that they allured him to his fate!

We hope the Democrats in Congress will not rest till they ascertain how President Grant vindicates himself and his administration, if at all, in this matter. The administration, to be sure, directed General Sickles to institute a reclamation in Madrid against the Spanish Government for "full reparation to the families or representatives of Charles Speakman and of Albert

Wyeth for their murder by the Spanish authorities," which was done; but the Minister of Foreign Affairs, Mr. Silveira, rejected the reclamation, after obtaining a full report of the facts from the Captain-General of Cuba. In his note to Mr. Sickles, October 11, 1869, the Spanish Minister of Foreign Affairs says:—

"The victim himself indicates where the responsibility lies, and addressing himself at the last moment to the object of his greatest affection, completely exempts the Spanish Government and accuses the shipowners and the Cuban Junta, who have deprived him of his life, and mentions the contract to land those men in Cuba. The shipowners and the Cuban Junta, whose mission is notorious, reside in the territory of the United States, and it is most just that the government, following the suggestion of the unfortunate Speakman, should endeavor to exact of them the responsibility which the last will of the accused throws upon them, and upon them exclusively. A case is impossible, therefore, in which the responsibility of the Spanish authorities could be more clearly proven."

We cannot agree to all the inferences which Mr. Silveira draws from the admitted facts of the case as to the liability of his Government. But this has nothing to do with the duty of President Grant to search out and punish the ship-owners and the members of the Cuban Junta who have deprived two American citizens of their lives. The Grapeshot must have been a registered vessel. She cleared regularly at this port for Jamaica. There can be no difficulty in the way of the administration to the ascertaining who are her owners, who her agents, who chartered her to the Cuban Junta, and the names of the Junta and the captain who conspired together to thrust Speakman and Wyeth into the insurrectionary bands of Cuba, and thence into the avenging hand of the Spanish authorities at Santiago.

HOW THE TARIFF "PROTECTS" THE WOOLLEN INTEREST.

From the N. Y. Times.

We have recently presented the facts in regard to the deplorable condition of some of our large industrial branches, such as the boot and shoe manufacture, the woollen interest, and others. We had expected from the Tribune, as the organ of high taxation, some defense of the unequal taxation on these great industries.

The country is groaning under the inequality or weight of these burdens, but thus far no word of excuse or explanation from the high tariff organs has been presented to show why Congress should nearly destroy these important trades by absurd taxation. Now, however, a voice comes forth from the very parties who are so vigorously "protected"—the manufacturers themselves—to disclaim, in the name of all that is reasonable, any more of such wolf-like "protection," and this complaint the Tribune is obliged to listen to. One, whom the journal describes as a widely known, and as a veteran, eminent and successful manufacturer, Mr. Harris, of Rhode Island, writes to our contemporary that his business—woollen manufacture—is suffering terribly from "over protection," and he then proceeds to explain his difficulties precisely as we had set them forth, in regard to the whole woollen interest, the day previous in the Times.

The simple facts being that we grow very little fine wools in the United States; that fine raw goods cannot be made here without an admixture of fine foreign wools, and in consequence Mr. Harris or any other manufacturer must either confine himself to coarse wools, or if he manufactures fine goods, must import fine wools at a duty of some 100 per cent. But fine woollen goods, manufactured abroad, already pay only fifty per cent. duty; so that, in the epigrammatic words of Mr. Harris, he is, under this tariff, "fifty per cent. worse off than under free trade." Moreover, as he correctly states the case, the fine wools which are excluded from this country by the tariff enter into manufactures abroad, and make them still cheaper and still more able to compete with our own.

The duty acts, too, as a bounty on smuggling, and, as any New England manufacturer knows, quantities of the foreign wools are now carried in bond over this country to Canada, where they are manufactured, and undoubtedly come back here as smuggled goods. The result is, as this manufacturer states, that the whole business is depressed, and the imports of foreign wools have increased two millions the past year, while our exports are down to a paltry one hundred and sixty-nine thousand dollars, against one hundred and thirty-nine millions from England during the same period.

The consolation which the Tribune administers to its suffering friend is not of an enlivening order, and though designed to be practical, is, we are compelled to say, not entirely based on facts. Thus, Mr. Harris is coolly told that he cannot get protection exactly as he likes it for his own factory. He has it at the rate of fifty per cent. on woollen goods; he must not complain if the farmers demand it at one hundred per cent. on fine wools. "The duty," says the Tribune, "benefits the American wool grower, and incites him to rear more sheep and produce more wool than if it were taken off. And you may talk till you are blind, without convincing the farmers that the fact is otherwise."

"We have more sheep and grow more wool now than we ever did before, and this we rejoice in." Now, Mr. Harris, if he has the opportunity, will undoubtedly say that as a patriotic citizen he might rejoice, if the depression of his own business promoted the welfare of such a large class of agriculturists as the wool growers; but he is compelled to call the Tribune's attention to certain stern facts in the statistics of wool growing. The average price of wool the past year was almost the lowest ever reached, being about forty-three cents, currency, per pound for medium wools. From 1827 to 1862, it was 42½ cents, gold, or about one-third higher. In 1868, the average price of Ohio wools was 35½ cents, gold. This certainly does not look like "protecting" the wool-growing interest. If a tariff of 100 per cent. accomplishes this, and almost ruins the wool-grower, what will the additional taxation, which the Tribune will doubtless urge as a remedy, do towards the same end?

Mr. Harris will probably also call the Tribune's attention to an interesting document issued by the Department of Agriculture, the reports for March and April, 1869. Some seven pages are devoted in this publication to the condition of sheep industry in 171 counties of 21 different States. We have space for but few extracts, but they are of the cheering character indicated by the following:—(Genesee county, New York, "decrease of sheep eighty per cent.;" Onondaga county, "one-fourth sold;" Butler county, Pennsylvania, "some kind sold;" Ohio county, "some kind sold;" Virginia, "forty per cent.;" Pennsylv. county, Missouri, "forty per cent. sold;" Dubuque county, Minnesota, "fifty per cent. slaughtered;" and similar accounts from other States, so that the Commissioner of Agriculture estimates the decrease of sheep, during 1868, at four millions, and other authorities put it higher. So much for our "having more sheep and growing more wool than ever before," which the Tribune "rejoices in." We suspect the Western sheep farmers do not share in this hilarity. The connection between the high tariff and the

low price of wool is clear, and if the Tribune desires information on it, it can readily obtain it among the manufacturers of New England.

A FEDERAL TELEGRAPH SYSTEM.

From the N. Y. Sun.

All the telegraph lines in Great Britain were transferred on the 1st of January to the Government. They are henceforth to be worked on a system analogous to that of the Post Office. For a message of twenty words, transmitted from any one station in the country to any other, the charge will be one shilling—equal to about twenty-four cents in specie here. The purchase of the telegraphs by the Government was not resolved upon without long and careful consideration as to the results which would probably follow it. The controlling argument in its favor appears to have been the fact that the rate charged for messages under the management of incorporated companies was much higher than that at which it was believed they could be profitably transmitted under Government control.

A similar measure, having for its object the purchase of the telegraph lines in the United States by the Federal Government, is now being urged upon Congress. It is a perilous scheme, which might do a manarchy but will not answer in a republic, but so far as it is by influential Republicans, it is not impossible the bill may become a law. The policy of the National Government shows each year a growing tendency toward centralization. The establishment of a postal telegraph will be a very long step in the direction which this policy so strongly favors; and on this account, if on no other, it merits the opposition of all who believe that a concentration of the governing power in the Federal rulers will prove perilous to the liberty of the people, and injurious to the public welfare.

The perpetuation of our free institutions depends very greatly upon the freedom of individual enterprise and the perfection of local self-government; and as the proposed Federal telegraph system is a decisive movement to smother private enterprise as well as to strengthen and increase the power of the individuals who may happen to exercise the local authority, we are heartily opposed to it.

It must be admitted that the management of our telegraphs, if it should become in any sense a monopoly, would be productive of more or less evil; and the advocates of the postal telegraph argue that it is better to place such a monopoly in the hands of the Government than to leave it under the control of private parties. But it seems to us that the evil which the proposition involves on account of being a measure of centralization combined with the corruption which will be inseparably connected with the management of the telegraphs by Government officials, affords reasons which far outweigh any urged in support of the bill now before the House of Representatives.

Can any one doubt that after the contemplated change the telegraph officials would serve the interest of the party and its managers upon whose favor their places would depend, rather than that of the public, whenever there, through the action of the authorities, might chance to be different? How could a more complete and thorough system of espionage be devised? Every despatch that passed over the wires could be read at Washington, should the President or any member of the Cabinet so desire; the same opportunity would be open to wirepullers of the governing party in every town; and such a power could not exist for any length of time without finding some one to use it and to abuse it. Certainly no Republican would trust a despatch to the telegraph when in the hands of Democrats, nor any Democrat when in the hands of the Republicans.

Of course the people would not bear this; and there is no advantage in doing now what inevitably would have to be done before many years have passed. We will not new staff of officials added to the pay-rolls of the nation, with perhaps a new department or bureau at Washington. The people already enjoy a sufficient number of public absurdities not to require the additional absurdity of seeing all the acting telegraph operators in the land removed once in every four years on the incoming of a new administration. If we cannot have cheap telegraphing unless accompanied by all these evils, it is better to go without it.

BUTLER ON THE WRONG TACK.

From the N. Y. Herald.

Ever since the death of Thad. Stevens the place of leader of the House has been a contested point. It has produced as many discussions in the lower house as the votes of the seven Republican Senators for Andy Johnson's acquittal did in the Senate. Butler and Schenck last session fought with the vigor of Big Bethel and Vienna combined over it, but Butler far overpowered Schenck, who was driven to the wall in such utter disorder that he has never attempted again to come up to the scratch. Bingham then advanced to claim the honor, but Butler with a single epithet disabled him, and he has of late made only a very slight show of fighting. Crawford and Logan, though both good fighters, have so far shown but little disposition to wrestle with the champion of Essex, and Banks has prudently refrained. Butler has therefore confirmed his right in some degree to the leadership, and his movement in the Virginia bill shows that he can crack his whip over his followers with as good effect as "Old Thad." himself ever did. This is an excellent success for a man who eleven years ago was a bright light in the Democratic party, reflecting the brilliant rays of fifty-two successive votes on Jeff. Davis for the Presidency, and who less than five years ago was so securely ensconced in a bottle by the President, whose party representatives he presumed to rule, that it was a wonder he ever came out unsmothered. It is a brilliant showing, and proves that Butler has nerve, ambition, and brains.

But his action of late strongly indicates that he has not judgment. He undertakes to smooth over the figures in Mr. Dawes' speech, arranging the economy of the administration, when, as the supporter of the administration, Mr. Butler should take just the other tack. General Grant's expressed policy, and that of the Republican party, is economy and retrenchment, and if his officials have failed in carrying out that policy they should be called to account. From Mr. Dawes' statement in his reply to Mr. Butler on Thursday, it would seem that the President himself did not discontinue the extravagance of the Department. Thus he, too, should be brought back to the terms of his party policy. It will not stop the expenditure any sooner to put the responsibility of it on Andy Johnson's shoulders, nor will the country avoid the effects of the dart by having its head hid in the sand like an ostrich. Let the estimates be ventilated, and if they are too large, as Mr. Dawes shows them to be, let them be cut down to agree with President Grant's original policy of retrenchment. As the presumed leader of the House Butler should keep an "eye single" to that one policy of economy. The figures of Grandfather Wallow, like George

Washington, cannot lie, nor can they be made to lie by General Butler except as a heavy weight on the conscience of Secretary Robeson. It would be better if Butler would let Wallow alone.

In addition to the true economy of the matter, Butler would evince more judgment in keeping his friends together than in slashing right and left among them. At the present rate he is digging out the foundations of his party in the House like a Dutch Gap, and if he goes on he will probably soon blow them up like the powder boat at Fort Fisher. And the two exploits no doubt will have even less effect for harm on his Democratic enemy than the Dutch Gap and Fort Fisher exploits had. His way of splitting up his own friends is sport to the Democratic boys but death to the Republican frogs. His leadership is yet to be confirmed by some wise and statesman-like stand. At the present rate, before he comes to that point he will either have no leadership or else no party to lead.

DOGS AND WOMEN.

From the N. Y. Tribune.

Philadelphia is well known as the one spot where charity dispels herself with peculiar zest. Once a year the spirit of her guardian angel, Penn, descends into and troubles the social waters, and the sick and suffering rush into the upheaval to be cured. This year, however, the healing mountains are open only to dogs. Dogs have suddenly been discovered to be the most precious heritage and wards of the Philadelphia public. The quality of mercy is there being strained for their benefit to the consistence of Hymettian honey. Verses in their honor are freely circulated in the public schools, and to every child who commits them a reward is given of the photograph of some notable cur. The ladies (God bless them!) who lead this popular movement have petitioned Councils for \$25,000 to erect an Asylum, or, more properly speaking, a House of Entertainment for such dogs as may have lost their way while pursuing their daily walks abroad. "This establishment," one of the fair ministers of mercy tells us, "is designed to serve as a temporary home, where dogs of the nobler kinds can be comfortably cared for until reclaimed by their masters." The Mayor, who is reported to be of an amiable and chivalric nature, lends a favorable ear to the project. Pending its acceptance by Councils a messenger has been despatched to London to obtain plans and specifications of a similar building in that city.

As it is not expedient, however, that many and underbred curs of the street should be received into this establishment, it was resolved by the ladies that, for these dogs of the baser sort, death was the most benign fate. They therefore have petitioned that the killing of them should be confined to their own fair hands, rather than to those of the policeman. Which petition has been granted. Whether they intend to use chloroform or simple cyanides in the operation, we have not yet been informed.

Mr. Bergh is, we believe, responsible for this gust of sweet emotion in our sister city. His downright method of preventing cruelty to animals by rendering it a penal offense is too rough and masculine for the female mind to accept. Besides, as we all know, the dominant sex no sooner get hold of a theory or principle than they be-riple and be-ruffle it, precisely as they would a dress. Worthy Mr. Bergh himself would no doubt be perplexed could he witness the fervent zeal with which they pursue this dog mania, and the sentiment, the flowers of poetry, with which they have embellished it. They will in all probability be successful. A strong effort was made in Councils to draw attention to the condition of Bedford street, a region whose horrors of human destitution exceed those of the Five Points at their worst days, and also to the fact that seventy-six thousand vagrants—men and women—last year sought shelter in the station-houses for want of a place to sleep. But the dog-biters, in their sweet enthusiasm, were deaf and blind to all protests. It is probable that their Temporary Home for the nobler breeds of curs, therefore, will be built.

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SPECIAL NOTICES.

OFFICE OF WELLS, FARGO & COMPANY, No. 81 BROADWAY, NEW YORK, December 28, 1869.—Notice is hereby given that the Transfer Books of Wells, Fargo & Company will be CLOSED on the 1st day of JANUARY, 1870, at 3 o'clock P. M. To enable the Company to ascertain who are owners of the stock of the old Ten Million Capital. The owners of that stock will be entitled to participate in the distribution of assets provided for by the agreement with the Pacific Express Company.

The Transfer Books will be opened on the 23rd day of JANUARY, at 10 o'clock A. M., after which time the \$5,000,000 new stock will be delivered.

Notice is also given that the Transfer Books of this Company will be CLOSED on the 25th day of JANUARY, 1870, at 3 o'clock P. M., for the purpose of holding the annual ELECTION OF DIRECTORS of this Company. The books will be RE-OPENED on the 7th day of FEBRUARY, at 10 o'clock A. M.

OFFICE PENNSYLVANIA RAILROAD COMPANY.

NOTICE TO STOCKHOLDERS.—The Annual Meeting of the Stockholders of this Company will be held on TUESDAY, the 15th day of February, 1870, at 10 o'clock A. M., at the Hall of the Assembly Buildings, S. W. corner of TRINTH and CHESTNUT Streets, Philadelphia.

The Annual Election for Directors will be held on MONDAY, the 7th day of March, 1870, at the Office of the Company, No. 228 S. THIRD Street.

OFFICE OF THE DELAWARE DIVISION CANAL COMPANY OF PENNSYLVANIA, No. 203 WALNUT Street.

PHILADELPHIA, Jan. 25, 1870.

The Annual Meeting of the Stockholders of this Company will be held at their office on TUESDAY, February 1, 1870, at 12 o'clock M., when an election will be held for Managers for the ensuing year.

OFFICE OF THE FREDOM IRON AND STEEL COMPANY, No. 230 South THIRD Street.

PHILADELPHIA, Jan. 17, 1870.

The annual meeting of the Stockholders of the BELVIDERE MANUFACTURING COMPANY will be held at the Office of the Company, No. 230 South THIRD Street, Philadelphia, on THURSDAY, February 3, 1870, at 12 o'clock M., when an election will be held for fifteen Directors to serve for the ensuing year.

The Transfer Books will be closed for fifteen days prior to the day of said election.

OFFICE OF THE BELVIDERE MANUFACTURING COMPANY.

NOTICE.—The Annual Meeting of the Stockholders of the BELVIDERE MANUFACTURING COMPANY will be held on FRIDAY, the 11th day of February, 1870, at 10 o'clock A. M., at the Office of the Company, No. 230 South THIRD Street, Philadelphia.

The Annual Meeting of the Stockholders of this Company will be held at their office on TUESDAY, February 1, 1870, at 12 o'clock M., when an election will be held for Managers for the ensuing year.

OFFICE OF THE CITY TREASURER.

PHILADELPHIA, Dec. 23, 1869.—Warrants registered to No. 25,000 will be paid on presentation at this office, interest ceasing from date.

PHILADELPHIA AND READING RAILROAD CO., Office, No. 227 S. FOURTH Street.

PHILADELPHIA, Dec. 23, 1869.

Dividend Notice.—The Transfer Books of this Company will be closed on FRIDAY, the 11th instant, and reopened on TUESDAY, January 11, 1870.

A dividend of FIVE PER CENT. has been declared on the Preferred and Common Stock, clear of National and State taxes, payable at the Office of the Company on FRIDAY, January 17, 1870, to the holders thereof as they stand registered on the books of the Company on the 31st instant. All payable at this office. All orders for dividend must be witnessed and stamped.

PHILADELPHIA AND TRENTON DELAWARE RAILROAD COMPANY, Office, No. 24 South 3RD Street.

PHILADELPHIA, January 19, 1870.

The Directors have this day declared a semi-annual dividend of