

THE NEW YORK PRESS.

Editorial Opinions of the Leading Journals Upon the Most Important Topics of the Hour.

COMPILED EVERY DAY FOR EVENING TELEGRAPH.

The Conflicting Reports from the Southern States.

From the Times.

In estimating the tone and temper of the Southern people it is unfair to consider them as a unit. We see on the one hand, from the pens of Southern writers, rose-colored pictures of a new prosperity, based on enterprise, industry, and education, and destined to excel all the prestige of the past. But from other writers, and those mostly of the prominent and leading men of the South, we get only gloomy prophecies of a ruined agricultural and a debased social condition.

The cheerful opinions first named come from the younger in years, the less established in life, the representatives of the young South, who, while perhaps cordially sorry that the experiment of a Southern Confederacy has failed, are still unconsciously elated with the hopes that an absolutely free government holds out to youth and energy. And again, the prophets of evil days are those who in any event have lost all that was most consoling to their pride of family or estate, and who can see in the regenerated South only a "nation of shopkeepers," with the loss of all that in their opinion gives dignity to a people.

Looking back to the old social position of the South, and the old social position of the North, we find that the former had all the essential elements of a class holding. They had the magnates of the land, holding the "poor whites" in a political subjugation designed to keep them ignorant and debased, and maintain in that subjugation the strong contrast afforded by the condition of the enslaved blacks. Labor was tabooed as disgraceful; and without labor the lower classes of whites remained, socially the nominal equals, politically the serfs, of the great landholders.

We do not expect to see this crushed aristocracy take the change good-naturedly. They are your true conservatives, and their eyes will always turn fondly to the faded glories of the good old days of aristocracy and class distinction in social intercourse. The same devotion which the Cavaliers gave to "Charlie over the water" when the dread element of popular power dethroned the Stuarts of England, will, for the same reasons, be given by the great planters and statesmen of the South to the last cause of slavery.

In England to-day, the dead Cobden and the living Bright and Stuart Mill are the innocents of what remains of British aristocracy. Suppose that the English progressive element were suddenly, as has happened here, enabled to open the flood-gates and confer the rights of suffrage on the operatives and peasantry of the kingdom. A few years of tempestuous debate would follow, perhaps a civil war, and in the end we should witness the destruction of the remains of feudalism, the overthrow of class legislation, the destruction of the Church establishment, and, at last, the breaking up of the great landed estates. Doubtless this would result about a more healthful prosperity and a more truthful greatness for England, but generations would pass before the last jerehmad over the "good old times" of oppression and wrong would be heard.

By a parity of reasoning, we do not expect to see among the first families of the South any demonstrative or really sincere loyalty to the new Union. They would destroy it if they could—but they cannot. It only remains to treat them fairly, and to indulge their little sulks and pettuleans. Human nature is too weak for such a sacrifice of all past and present prejudices as some of our radicals would seem to require. Why not let these old gentlemen drive and grumble as they would like, respecting the new Union, and let the new Union respect them in the very risky and not-almost-American business of "founding a family," will sympathize with them—but nobody else will care.

It is our duty to see that nothing of the grand principle of the right of free Liberty and the pursuit of happiness, is abandoned. Honestly believing that we are acting for the best interests of the Southern masses, we can afford to be liberal to political old age and decrepitude. If the policy of the Southern press—which is truly loyal would only recognize and profit by these evident antagonisms, if, instead of vague platitudes, they would fairly express the irrepressible conflict between class legislation and the plain people's liberty, would become the adequate university of the South, founded on universal education, and thus attract to the support of the Government the lower and more numerous classes, and build them up into an industrious and substantial middle estate, they would, by the aid of natural laws and not by governmental tyranny, send home the wedge that would sever forever the unnatural alliance between the landed aristocracy and the lower classes of the South.

Physical Suffrage.

From the Tribune.

The question of colored suffrage—as for the sake of convenience we call it—must be discussed. Some soft-headed, shallow, and violently fanatical men think to shovel it out of the way, as they thought to shovel slavery; but put it down as you will, and we expect to see it put down a good many times, it will presently come up again to vex us. We have four opinions, and we do not pretend that they are infallible; and we are always glad to listen to what can be said upon the other side. Mr. Senator Davis, if we understand his remarks made in his place on the 12th instant, contends that blacks should not vote—

- 1. Because a foul odor exudes from their skin.
2. Because their heels make holes in the ground.

We have thought over the matter with all possible care and gravity, but thus far we have been unable to discover what personal fragrance has to do with the right of suffrage. There was, it is true, an ancient notion that kings were naturally sweet-scented, and the courtiers of Alexander the Great were so, that his body reminded them of violets—but we believe they lied, and Alexander, who was the best judge, was of the same opinion. All we contend for is fairness. There are in this city thousands of men to whom water, soap, and towels are unknown, or at least unused luxuries—who though called white by courtesy, carry cuticles grimy with the accretions of years—who are therefore not pleasant to the nostrils of their nicer fellow-citizens; yet they not only vote but they vote often at the same election—they not only vote but they are voted for—they not only vote but they assault and batter those who do not agree with them.

What "exudes from their skins" we cannot say, though we are sure that it is not Balm of a Thousand Flowers, but that which, from morning to night, and so on until the next morning, goes into their skins, is of a compound flavor of camphene and alcohol, and though it may give them a strong odor, it does not give them a bad breath. Suppose we had taken the ground that these free and independent gentlemen ought to be excluded from the polls on account of their malodorous misfortunes, or rather faults? And if you begin, where would you draw the line? Are you to turn the election authorities into a smelling committee? Besides, there is no disputing of tastes. Some people like one smell, some another—some flavor the scent of garlic, while to others it is intolerable. By what standard shall we legally, constitutionally, and equitably turn up our noses?

We wish that Mr. Davis, who is a very learned man, had told us with what ratiocination he deduced the fact that long heels are incompatible with an intelligent and honest exercise of the right of suffrage. His speech would have been the most entertaining, erudite, instructive, novel, fascinating, and unanswerable thing on

record since the great Slawkenbergius came to the world his Theory of Noses. Dr. Gall judged men by craniological protuberances, the good Lavater by facial lines; Dr. Davis goes plump down to the heels; he scrutinizes it, he compares it, he measures it, he criticizes it, and, growing with patriotic science, he cries out that the heights of the land will be endangered if the owner of such a misshapen, elongated, hole-in-the-ground excavating heel is to be allowed to vote! We bow with reverence to the doctor, but we do not understand human curiosity, that he had told us the reason why.

For a man does not think with his heel; he does not read with his heel; he does not ask questions with his heel; he does not unless he heels over head, make up his mind by, with, or through his heel—his heel is a better heel than the heel of Achilles, and had been soused seven times in the St. x—a most inviolable, indestructible, and invaluable heel! Davis refers to Cuvier, but we will water whatever Davis writes, but we will not water whatever Cuvier writes. It is not only the connection between long heels and the right of suffrage. These tancies are fascinating, but are they not a little dangerous? By-and-by—who can insure against it?—a far-seeing science will be discovered, perhaps that with red hair, or with thin beards, or with bandy legs, are of "an inferior race," unless indeed the red-haired, thin-bearded, and bandy-legged men get the black-haired, bushy-bearded, and straight-legged men, and cut them off from the fecundity of the ballot.

Mr. Davis does not see into what a topsy-turvy world he would introduce us, nor how, if these superfluous objections were having their swing, he might be objected to for coquetry in personal beauty, though he may be the handsomest man in Congress for anything we know; but then the ugly ones might bring ugliness into political fashion, and put a change into the Constitution "verse to the right" as a Cuvierian? But we will suppose them to be, and beautiful as they are in the eyes of Dr. Davis' bootmaker. Yes, he might be objected to, and elected from his seat Senator, though he cried out never so lustily, "I, too, am a Cuvierian!"

But, perhaps if we could find such well-educated—and there have been such—or if he were not very black—and there have been "blacks" (begging his pardon) as white as the Doctor—perhaps if we could find such, who, after careful measurement of their heels and proper examination of their odor, turned out to be short and sweet, do you think our fastidious Senator would allow them to vote? We are afraid not. He would, perhaps, after all, be obliged to come pounce upon us with lorty fresh arguments, and after all these were refuted, that he would find forty more equally good. Wherefore we bid him to hold fast by his heel-and-odor theory, for, though good for nothing, it is as good as any which he is likely to excogitate.

Beecher Proclaims the Gospel.

Mr. Beecher has been lecturing to crowded audiences in several cities of the interior. The first part of his address was a thoroughly New England view of the causes which led to the war—a contest, as he regarded it, with unalloyed liberty and intelligence on one side, and slavery and ignorance on the other. Between two such issues, a war of physical force was, he argued, inevitable. This position of his argument saved more of Mohammedan fatalism than the Christian doctrine of non-resistance. He had little confidence in temperate submission, to that true wisdom and sound statesmanship which is ever

with food still overcoming evil and by small Accomplishes great things and wordly aims." By these means the path of progress would have been traveled more slowly, but we should have reached the mark more surely and more safely. Many hundreds of thousands of lives—whose cost is represented, and who is now contented to work longer for less food, less clothing, and higher rents, and lower position in the social scale. The negro himself has not so far profited by the sudden change. Mr. Beecher, we believe, expressed an opinion that ten years must elapse before the material condition of the former slave would be greatly improved. But all these issues are those of the past. We cannot recall them if we would. They are dead and have no life in them. Let, then, the dead bury their dead. All legislation for the future, only, and it should profit by the experience and lessons of the past.

We have sincere pleasure in observing the moderation and practical wisdom of Mr. Beecher, and we hope that his address will be a real blessing to the people. It is true he still clings to certain peculiar Yankee notions, more than we think is correct in reason or useful in its tendency. It certainly served his purpose with his audience to assure them of their great and remarkable victory. It is quite the custom of certain legal advocates, in addressing a jury, to congratulate themselves publicly on having heeded so peculiarly intelligent. No other universal dodge endears a pleader so tenderly to the hearts of his hearers, and soothes their passions so gently into acquiescence with his appeals. So many men would rather be told they are slow, stupid, and knowing than that they are honest, virtuous, or religious; but when Mr. Beecher ascribes the great prosperity of this nation to the intelligence which it has acquired, by so much as one word, the immense resources which Providence, not our own "cuteness or smartness, has placed at our disposal, he teaches men that "wisdom in their own conceits" which is productive of unfavorable to any high degree of intelligence.

Mr. Beecher, we are sure, cannot fall to see the error of Sir Morton Peto, who, on his return to England, coolly advised the people of his native country to "militate the resources" of the United States. It would be well, certainly, for that nation to manufacture a chain of two of lakes like those on our northern frontier. Its property would be much increased by creating three or four territories of rich land like Illinois, with three adequate and appropriate rivers, and a few hundred miles of Rocky Mountains full of gold and silver, and locating them in the middle of their little island. It would be well done if it were done quickly. Will any "intelligent" New Englander, under the contract of England, the prosperity of those countries would be greatly increased. And yet we have all these temporal blessings, and far more than these, to add to our prosperity, with little exercise of our own "intelligence," and far too often with a best a dim and imperfect recognition of the Superior Intelligence which made them all and gave them to us.

of those generous and impassioned appeals which reach to the heart of every man who hears them, and has a true and honest heart within him. He would have Georgia and South Carolina as prosperous as Massachusetts and New York; he would have liberty for the southern whites man; defeated in arms, he should be elevated and made prosperous and happy. Not, he thought, that the cause of universal suffrage should be surrendered; but let the freedman qualify himself more and more for the sacred privilege; let Ohio, also, where the colored man has no vote at all, Michigan, where he has no vote, and other Northern States where he has no vote, cleanse themselves thoroughly before they concede the South. He would have as more shedding of blood, no hanging, not even of Jeff. Davis, for political offenses; he would have a total cessation of strife; if we are to go on and hang all who have done wrong, where, he asked, would the executions cease? He would have the United States to be not only a nation for the welfare of the nation that the North should be generous, but that she should be so thoroughly and heartily in earnest in her generosity that the South could not help knowing and feeling the strength and purpose of the motives for her actions. He exerted the utmost power of his eloquence and vigor in support of these views. What, if he now and then struck wildly at the Democrats? It pleased him, and it does not harm us.

We are pleased to find so wholesome a change in public sentiment as to permit Mr. Beecher to express so many worthy and Christian sentiments in Erie county, where poor Benedict, the village preacher, among the soldiers, was imprisoned, and whence he was carried to Washington, in defiance of all law, because he had preached to the troops from the text of the beautiful sermon once delivered on the Mount.

The Meeting of the French Chambers—Writing in Washington for the Speech of Napoleon on Mexico.

From the Herald. From our European news by the Asia it appears that the French Senate and Corps Legislatif had been summoned to assemble on the 22d January (last Monday), and that the opposition deputies had met a meeting at which "they had decided to direct their efforts chiefly to the Mexican question." At the same time, from information received from Washington, we infer that the Committee on Foreign Affairs on the House of Representatives will withhold any recognition of the Mexican government as a purpose to abandon the imperial Mexican enterprise, and an explanation to cover his retreat satisfactory to France. At all events, we have reason to anticipate that the receipt of the Emperor's speech will be promptly followed by such action on the part of Congress as the occasion may seem to demand.

That the Emperor's speech will define a line of policy on his part satisfactory to our Government we have reason to believe from a late significant leading article in the "Morning Post" and from similar articles from other leading French journals and periodicals. The purpose of Napoleon thus suggested we find very broadly expressed in the Paris correspondence of the "Lancet" of December 31, in which it is stated that "we expect to see the journals which are the recipients of governmental inspiration a note which may permit us to see, in no very distant future, the evacuation of Mexico." From the same authority it further appears that "the highest circles in Paris are becoming enlightened as to Mexico and very indulgent as to Maximilian, who is showing himself at the same time both incapable and ungrateful to France, to whom he owes everything," and that "it is even regretted that the friends of his Government precedents rendered all relations with Jarez impossible." The French journals, it further appears, are quite disgusted with the indifference and ingratitude of Austria. The Power most directly interested in Mexico, the United States, but it is now contented to work longer for less food, less clothing, and higher rents, and lower position in the social scale. The negro himself has not so far profited by the sudden change. Mr. Beecher, we believe, expressed an opinion that ten years must elapse before the material condition of the former slave would be greatly improved. But all these issues are those of the past. We cannot recall them if we would. They are dead and have no life in them. Let, then, the dead bury their dead. All legislation for the future, only, and it should profit by the experience and lessons of the past.

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But we cannot regard Mr. Beecher with any prejudice. We will not stop to inquire whether he is from sound reasons, the warmth of his own nature, or Christian principles, that he now heartily advocates the happiness, honor, and welfare of our common country, and wisely and honorably yields in some degree, his own opinions to the wishes, in certain particulars, to a better and stronger desire for the welfare and genuine union of the nation.

Mr. Beecher boldly proclaimed his own desire for the extension of suffrage, not only to all men, but also to all women—meaning, of course, all women as well as men of every color, though this was implied rather than elaborately asserted in his discourse—believing the exclusion of the "gentler and purer sex" to be a relic of bygone and barbarous ages. "The right of suffrage," he should have all this, labor, rights of contract, civil rights, and the right of suffrage. "But," said Mr. Beecher, in one of his confidential and inexpressive whispers, "shall I insist upon that? Is it now too late?"

"If I," said he, with one of those humorous shrugs and intonations which would have made his fortune in another line of life which is not popular in New England, "had been President, I would have done differently." But as he would not be President, he would submit, for the sake of aiding the cause of peace and the welfare of the South. And then Mr. Beecher led off in one

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