THE NEW YORK PRESS.

EDITORIAL OPINIONS OF THE LEADING JOURNALS UPON CURRENT TOPICS.

COMPILED RYERY DAY FOR EVENING TELEGRAPH

John H. Surratt.

From the Tribune. Nearly eighteen months have passed since the death of the principal conspirators in the apsassination of Abraham Lincoln, and still the plot remains a mystery. A bright theatre-Test leaping on the scene-a wounded man at bay in a Virginia barn, defying his pursuers, and shot by the blunder of a soldier-a sick min' bed, and the assassin with his knife at his toront-the secret consultations of murderers, coming and going under various names and disguises-these are the figures in that terrible picture, in which, like those of Rembrandt, vast shadows enshroud a fierce and lurid light. The gallows, with four corpses, and one of them a woman-the Dry Tortugas, where four convicts expeate in wretched solitude their crimesa quiet grave far away in Illinois -these are its companion pictures, and yet there is one more ten one. It is that of a man flying from the land where he was born; flying from the avenger Death, now the body of his victim, from the corpse of his mother on the scaffold, seeking in vain to to c himself in the great world, and to blot his name from the memory of man. This is John Harrison Surratt, of whose equal guilt in the crime there is no doubt, and by whom,

it is believed, much that is hidden may be

The evidence taken before the military commission in June, 1865, proved John H. Surratt to be one of the principal conspirators. It was at the house of his mother that the meetings were held; up to the week of the assassination he had been journeying between Richmond and Montreal; Booth was his constant companion; Mudd concealed him in the woods near his house; Payne consulted with him; Atzerodt confessed that Surratt induced him to join the conspiracy; one Nott, a Rebel, when he heard of the murder, it was sworn, exclaimed:—"My God! John Surratt knew all about this, and do you suppose he is going to stay in Washington, and let them catch him '? His name was the first in the indictment. Had there been any doubt of his guilt, his flight would have moved it, for though none of the principals were more frequently seen up to the 3d of April, on the afternoon of the 14th he was seen for the last time, booted and spurred, ready for his escape. From that time the very existence of John Surratt was a mystery; it was believed he was dead; that he had re-vealed the names of his fellow-conspirators to the Government, and had been allowed to escape; that he was secretly imprisoned. It was noted that no reward was offered for his arrest. Yet, as time passed on John Surratt was torg tten, till the other day came the startling news that he had been arrested by the American Consui-General in Egypt.

De Quincey, in illustration of the vast empire

and power of the Romans, imagines a fugitive from the vengeance of the Emperor vainly seeking to escape his grasp. North, South, East, or West, wherever the wretched man may fly, he treads within the circle of Rome, and her hand is raised above him; though he fly to the uttermost parts of the earth, Casar will be before him. In this age, justice is as hard to escape. The great criminal hides in vain in foreign lands, changes his name or disguises his person. Sur-Tatt's person was not very easy to disguise. A tall man, with a prominent forehead and very large no e, with deeply sunken eyes and long brack hair. Thus he was described at the trial. Of his wanderings, little is known. It is said that he was recognized on a Liverpool steamer shortly after the murder. Then came the rumor that he was serving as a private soldier in the Pope's Guards at Rome. We know now that he had been a soldier in the Papal Zouaves at Veroli, and served under the name of John Watson. The fact became known to Mr. Rufus King, our Minister at Rome, who telegraphed to our Government, and was instructed to secure his arrest. Mr. King conferred with Carsinal Antonelli, whe issued an order for his seizure. Surratt was taken; he was imprisoned; and on removal from jail, guarded by five somers, broke from their hands, jumped, it is said, over a precipice more than one hundred fee nigh, and escaped into the Italian territory. Mr. Marsh, our Minister at Florence, obtained telegraphic instructions from the Italian Government to have all the seconds of Halve ernment to have all the seaports of Italy

wa ched to prevent his escape.

Lie was soon supposed to have embarked in a steamer for Malta, and a despatch to that island arrived too late to detain him; another was sent to Alexandria, and when Surratt stepped upon the shores of Egypt, he was seized by the strong, far-reaching arm of America. United States detectives, it is said, have watched him since October. But long before this he must have been overtaken by a speedier, surer foe. Fear was ever at his back; from remorse he could hardly escape, for even if he could forget the crime he had committed, how could be ever cease to see the phantom of his mother on the gallows? Coward all the world believed him, since that day when he fled and left her to suffer; a coward, it was said, she held him, and in her last moments refused to hear his name.

There is true dramatic interest in this imperfect history. The escape and pursuit of no other criminal in this century has so much to excite the imagination. No man, it is possible, not even Bootn, worked harder to accomplish the murder; and a deeper interest is given to his share in the conspiracy by his frequent jour-neys to Richmond. Upon Surrait's presumed connection with the Rebel Government, Andrew Johnson charged Jetterson Davis with complicity in the assassInation. New revelations are expected from his trial; the public may be disappointed in that, yet if John H. Surratt could be induced to confess, before the death which is almost certain to be his tate, there is no reasonable doubt but that he might tell the whole story of Lincoln's assassination from the beginning to the end.

The Violence of Congress.

From the World. The proceedings of Congress, during the four days it has been in session, evince all the rancor of faction, but none of the grave wisdom which befits the supreme council of the nation. It is conscious weakness, not conscious strength, that breaks out in such intemperate ebullitions. What can the Republicans expect to gain by the indecent haste of their demonstrations against the President? Why should the very first day of the session have been selected for starting a bill for the assembling of the Fortieth Coppress on the 5th of March? If such a bill should be passed the last week in February it would be equally efficient; and the broaching it at this early day is such an exhibition of undignified and incontinent spite as must lower that body in the estimation of considerate men. Its hot impatience to repeal the annesty clause of the confiscation act is equally needless, except as a display of ungovernable petulance.

There was no likelihood that the President in the pr

intended any further pardons at present. He has for some time steadily refused to grant any, and if he had attached any importance to the section about to be repealed, he could easily have forestalled and frustrated this movement by an amnesty before the meeting of Congress.
It was contrary to all probability that he intended to usue any pardons during the first month of the session. Congress has therefore acted more in the spirit of a weak, scolding woman, whose wrath torments her till she has given it vent, than like a body of self-poised legislators. Their attempt to curb the appointing power of the President is open to the same

The President has made all the removals he thought expedent; and during the ensuing tour months every appointment must be sub mitted to the Senate for confirmation before it can take effect. Even if a restraint upon the appointing power were necessary, it requires no immediate haste; and if the bill passes for convening the Fortieth Congress on the 5th of March, the Senate will be in perpetual session, and supersede the necessity of any other check. Blind, headlong impulse, and precipitate wrath, not cool reflection and sober judgment, control the proceedings of Congress.

We should not have witnessed these splenetic exhibitions if the Republicans were not secretly conscious of their impotence. They know well chough that Conzres is merely a legislative, not an executive body. The laws it passes will not execute themselves, and no laws can be enforced in the South except by officers already confirmed by the Senate. The recent removals have all been in the North, and neither the Senate nor Congress can turn out any officer who has been confirmed. The North will get on well enough whether Mr. Johnson's recent and unconfirmed appointees are displaced or retained; and Federal officers in the South are not likely to enforce clearly unconstitutional laws, Congress could, indeed, remove such officers by impeachment; but as every person impeached is entitled to a trial, with ample opportunities of defense, the Southern officers could not be all deposed in this way before the new-born babes of the present year grew to be men.

Even if the radicals should adopt the most extreme measure which has yet been broached that of declaring the States to be Territories and prescribing Territorial Governments for them-it would practically amount to nothing. The constitutionality of such a law would be at once contested in the Supreme Court, which is aiready committed on that subject, and would be bound by its own recent precedents. If Congress declares the States to be Territories, or if it assumes that the ratifications of less than three-fourths of the whole number will suffice for Constitutional amendments, the only consequence will be that the Supreme Court will declare such legislation void, and the whole sub-

ect will revert into its present shape.

The President is calm, confident, and assured, because he has measured the power of his opponents, and knows that they have exhausted all their resources of hostility, except such as the Supreme Court will adjudge unconstitutional. Congress vapors and blusters because it sees that it has no effectual power, and that, unless it can terrify the South by bravado, it has gone to the length of its tether.

The First Steps of Congress Towards Southern Restoration. From the Herald.

In the House of Representatives on Tuesday last there were two independent propositions adopted, looking to the reconstruction and restoration of the excluded Southern States. We may say they were of the highest importance, as indicating a two-third vote in favor of a comprehensive reconstruction, embracing the reorganization of the States concerned from the disorganized condition in which they stood when first disarmed as members of a hostile confederacy.

The first of these propositions was in the shape of a resolution from Mr. Wentworth, of Illinois, to this effect—that in response to the President's Message on the status of the lately insurgent States, still excluded from Congress, "the House finds in their many acts of disloyalty since its last adjournment, as well as in the recent elections in the loyal States, additional reasons for insisting on the adoption of the pending Constitutional amendment before it will consider the propriety of giving such States Congressional representation." Mr. Aucona (Democrat), of Pennsylvania, moved to lay this resolution on the table, and the yeas and nays being ordered, the call resulted—yeas thirty-two, nays one hundred and nineteen, whereupon the resolution was adopted without a division. It will thus be seen that nearly four-fiths of the House are in favor of adhering to the amendmend as a basis of Southern restoration. We may conclude, therefore, that as the next Congress, lately elected, is substantially the present Congress over again, this resolution is fixed to the 4th of March, 1869, and covers the question whether the excluded States shall or shall not be admitted into the Presiden-

tial election of 1868. recognized States; for it is morally certain that, unless their balance of power is brought into the scales, the approaching Presidential election will result in another lease of power to the dominant party, executive as well as legisla-tive. But the second proposition to which we have rejerred aims at the cutting out of these Southern embarrassments by the root. It was put in the form of a resolution from Mr. Broomail of Pennsylvania, instructing the Committee on Territories "to inquire into the expediency of reporting a bill providing Territorial Governments for the several districts of country within the jurisdiction of the United States formerly occupied by the once existing States of Virginia, North Carolina, Georgia, Florida, Alaoama, Mississippi, Louisiana, Arkansas, and Texas, and giving to all adult male inhabitants therein born within the limits of the United States, or duly naturalized, and not participants in the late Rebellion, full equal rights in such Terri-

This sweeping proposition was adopted-yeas one bundred and seven, nays thirty-seven—a vote of nearly three-fourths of the House. To be sure, this is a mere inquiry ordered, but the vote indicates the opinion and, probably, the fixed purpose of both Houses. The bill, we exwill in due season be reported, and from this preliminary vote we infer, that, if put to the test, it can be passed over the President's veto, when it will be a law of the land. We believe, however, that it in the meantime the excluded States, even as now organized, adopt the pend ing Constitutional amendment, and shape their local Governments and Congressional elections so as to meet its conditions, they will be admitted into Congress after the example of Tennessee. It is because of the intractable and depant spirit manifested by the ruling politicians of the States concerned, that Mr. Broomall proposes the extreme remedy of reducing them not only to the condition of Territories, but to the control of their black population. Think of that—a Scuth Carolina Territorial Legislature

of blacks making laws for Wade Hamilton. It is between this extreme and awful remeds and the Constitutional amendment that the unreconciled States have to choose—a choice of a salivating treatment of calomel and jalap, or a salivating treatment of caloinel and jatap, or a little of the sweet spirits of nitre with some fincture of rhubarb. Nor can we promise that any very long margin of time will be allowed for a decision upon the subject. We seriously entertain the opinion, nevertheless, that if South Carolina, for example, within a mouth or two shall adopt the amendment and frame her local institutions and her elections accordingly, she will be restored as a State without being subjected to this threatened territorial ordeal warnings which we have so repeatedly given the States and people concerned are now reduce to "a fixed fact." Nothing better will be offered them than the Constitutional amendment, and if it is not very soon accepted something much worse will assuredly follow.

Reorganization at the South. From the Times.

The unsatisfactory condition of affairs at the South is established by the reports of the military commanders stationed there. To many of the statements emanating from that section, respecting outrages upon freedmen, and other evidence of aversion to Federal control, we have paid little attention, believing that they were colored, if not invented, for partisan purposes. But to the representations made by our military authorities in the Southern States no suspicion can possibly attach. Whatever be their opinions on controverted political questions, at any rate they are responsible and impartial. They enjoy the well-earned confidence of the loyal people of the land, and their averments will undoubtedly be accepted as conclusive on questions of fact.

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On the important fact touching the treatment of the irredmen, the testimony of the Generals is positive and unfavorable. An idea has obtained that South Caroline has done itself has obtained that south Caroline has done itself honor by the fullness of its provisions for justice to the colored people. General Sickles, however, reports that in some districts of the state the freedman is dependent upon the presence and protection of national troops for security for life, limb, or property." A prevailing indisposition to prosecute, and a failure to punish offenders, when negroes are the suf-ferers, is imputed to the local authorities; and an extraordinary State enactment is cited, under which militin officers may "disperse, suppress, kill, and destroy any company of freedmen or others who shall be found lurking in any suspected place where they may do mischief."
From Kentucky General Davis reports as increase of lawlessness since the triumph of Revel candidates at the election, General Wood, writing from Mississippi, shows that laws remain in force prohibiting freedmen from pur-chasing real estate, and that only freed-men who have obtained special license are per-mitted to bear arms. The inferior local authorities, too, are slow to proceed against Rebel offenders, who usually escape unpunished. General Sheridan, referring to affairs in Texas, speaks yet more positively. There, the General remarks, "the trial of a white man for the murder of a treedman would be a farce." And while a great outery is raised when a single white settler is killed by Indians, "over the killing of many freedmen in the settlements nothing is done.

Again, Arkansas has been singled out as by comparison a reconstructed State. It sent loyal men to Washington last winter, and has seemed to be largely impregnated with Northern influences. Encouraged, probably, by the position assumed by the President, and the greater degree of boldness which distinguishes the tone of Southern politicians on national affairs, the Rebel element in Arkansas has asserted its right to rule. Governor Murphy is not an extreme man, as the manner in which he presented the Constitutional amendment to the local Legislature for ratification proved. Apart from him, the State Government is once more in Rebel hands. The three members of Congress elect were chosen because of the support they gave to the Rebelhon; the State officers, with the exception of the Executive chair, have been assigned to conspicuous Rebels; a large majo-rity of the Legislature belong to the same class; and all the countles save three have given their minor local offices to men who have waged war against the Government. The Union men of the State propose to meet in convention to petition Congress for a grant of the same powers which were entrusted to them three years ago, when the work of reconstruction on present basis was undertaken. The men who co-operated with Mr. Lincoln then ask now for power to begin anew, with the light of recent experience to guide them. The mere issue of the call for a gathering to petition has aroused the ire of the Rebels in the State Legislature, who have talked of legislation to aid the Governor in suppressing the movement. Forcible suppression, after the style in vogue at New Orleans, is bardly likely to be attempted. And the Unionisis, we presume, will make them-selves heard at Washington.

North Carolina seems no nearer bona fide re construction than other parts of the South. The election of an ultra secessionist, Judge Manly, to the United States Senate, illustrates the predominant temper of the Legislature. Ex-Governor Holden—one of President Johnson's ap-pointees—declares, in the Raleigh standard, of which he is the editor, that the Provisional Government experiment has been a failure; that "the President was deceived, and his Provisional Governors were occeived;" that "all hope that existing Southern organizations will concur in measures necessary to restore the Southern States to the Union is at an end;" and that "there is nothing left but to reorganize the Southern States." For this conclusion the represented States may not be fully prepared. But the expression of such an opinion in such a quarter is a sign of the times not to be over-looked, while the facts we have collated may help to familiarize us with the outlines of the

Southern position. That anything short of the surrender of the Union party and principle will satisfy the present leaders of Southern opinion, we do not believe. Even President Johnson does not satisfy them; for, though opposed to the Constitutional amendment, the language of his Message commits him to the support of the test oath. But the South will have neither. It refuses to ratify the amendment, and it demands the admission to Congress of whomsoever it may choose to send, Rebel or no Rebel, "We utterly reject his test oath," is the answer of the Rich mond Examiner—a journal which, under its present management, is one of the most efficient exponents of Southern opinion. "We think the South would rather stay out of Congress indedthan be represented by persons who would swallow the oath, is the statement with which the Examiner disposes of Mr. Johnson's safeguard. It is evident, therefore, that the amendment is not the obstacle to restoration. The real obstacle is the aversion of the Southern politicians to everything calculated to insure the peace and integrity of the nation. They require that they should dictate terms before resuming their places in the Union.

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UNION LEAGUE HOUSE PHILADELPHIA, December 3, 1866

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UNION LEAGUE OF PHILADELPHIA

WILL BE HELD AT THE

LEACUE HOUSE. ON MONDAY, December 10, at 8 O'Clock P. M.

By order of the Board of Directors. GEORGE H. BOKER,

SECRETARY. TO ARCHITECTS.

PLANS AND SPECIFICATIONS FOR NEW BUILDINGS FOR THE WAR DEPARTMENT AT WASHINGTON, D. C.

Architects are invited to prepare plans and specifications and estin ares of cost for new fire proof baildings
for the War Department, on the afte now occupied by
the War Department and adjacent vacant ground, in
Washington, D. C.

The buildines required should have a superficial area
as large as the site selected will admit of. Photographs of site, and all other information relating to the
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A premium of \$3000 for the first, of \$2000 for the
second, and of \$1000 for the third most acceptable
plans and specifications received, will be awarded,
upon the approval or the Hon. Secretary of War, by
the Board or Officers charged with the duty of selecting a site and preparing plans and specifications for the
buildings of the War Department under act of Congress
approved July 28, 1866.

The plans and specifications must be sent to the effice
of Brevet Lieutenant t olovel T. J. Treadwell, Recorder
of the Board Oronance Office, Winder's Bealding,
Washington, D. C., on or before the 1st day of February,
1867.

The Board will reserve the right to reject any or all

The Board will reserve the right to reject any or all plans submitted, should none be deemed suitable for the purpose, as well as to retain any or all of such plans. 11 20 lm] T. J. TREADWELL, Brevet Lieutenant-Colonel, U. S. A., Recorder.

OFFICIAL.

EXAMINATIONS FOR THE NAVY.

TO VOLUNTEER OFFICERS.

NAVY DEPARTMENT.

WASHINGTON, D. C., November 20 1866,

All persons who have served as volunteer officers in the United States Navy for the term of two years, and who desire to be examined for admission to the regular Navy, as provided in the act of congress approved July 25, 1866, will at once make application, addressed to commodore S. P. Lee, Hartford, Connecticut, who will, notify them when to appear Those who do not make application prior to the 1st of January next, or who do not present themselves when notified, will be considered as having waived their claim for examination Candidates, will take with them, when summoned, their official papers showing their naval record.

GILEON WELLES,

11 23fmwlm Secretary of the Navy.

CORN EXCHANGE NATIONAL BANK PHILADELPHIA. October 16, 1866.

The Vice-President of the Bank, Alexander Whiliden, Esq., baving in May last, to leve of a prolonged absence in Europe resumed his position, the Board of Directors to day elected J. W. Torre, Esq., Sice-President, and H. P. & chetky, Esq., Cashier.

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