THE NEW YORK PRESS.

EDITORIAL OPINIONS OF THE LEADING JOURNALS UPON CURRENT TOPICS.

COMPILED EVERY DAY FOR EVENING TELEGRAPH.

Armament and Disarmament.

From the Independent.

Thucydides, at the opening of his history, dates the period when the Athenians became a civilized people from the time when they ceased to wear arms as a part of their daily dress and equipment. The same test holds good now as much as in the days of Pericles and Solon. The Northern States, as a general rule, vindicate their title to be civilized communities by the fact that the great mass of their inhabitants trust for their personal protection to the arm of the Commonwealth. The Southern States can never claim a rank above that of semi-barbarious tribes as long as all men go armed, and take justice, injustice oftener, into their own hands. There is no surer touchstone of true civilization, after all, than this. For civilization implies the lodging of the power of defending rights and redressing wrongs in the hands of the State, and the resignation of the exercise of this power, originally vested in each individual, by all its constituent members. Then every citizen or subject can possess his soul in peace, and can pursue the works of peace, from which proceed all the refinements of science, of art, of luxury—everything that constitutes the glory of a civilized nation.

It is with the nations, thus made up of civilized men, in the great republic of nations, as with the individual inhabitants of each. To go unarmed, whenever the time shall come of disarmament, will be the true proof of the highest civilization, and until then the perfect triumph of civilization cannot be had. For there is no distinction between true civilization and true Christianity, and the one must be imperfect until it conforms itself to the image of the other. And we may hope that this day may come sooner than the millennium, when swords and spears are to be beaten into ploughshares and pruning-hooks. Disarmament will not imply the denial of the right of self-defense, but only the placing it on its true and most effectual footing. In this particular we have given profitable lessons to the world, both before our late war and since it ended.

Practically we were an unarmed nation when the war began. Our army and navy were scarcely appreciable quantities six years ago. And it was on this ground that the Rebels and their European allies founded their confidence of victory. We were without soldiers, arms, or ships. We looked like an example to warn all nations never to be caught without a great military and naval establishment. But as soon as Edmund Ruffin fired the first gun at Sumter (an act of treason for which he sensibly enough went out and hanged himself) armed men sprung out of the ground, ships rose like exhalations out of the sea, and we soon had the most powerful army and navy in the world.

This was an astonishment to the natives, but greater yet was the ease with which these banded armies melted back into the mass of the population, and went about their business as if they had never seen a squadron set on the field, or knew the division of a battle more than a spinster. Our destruction was then sure to come upon us, thought they. But we resolutely declined being destroyed. Now, the armies of Europe are really what Jefferson (or some one else) said of the slaves:—"They are the wolf by the ears, but which can neither be held nor let go." The mode of filling these armies is just now the problem which perplexes monarchs. It is assumed that they must all have armies; but how to contrive to make them compatible with public safety and general prosperity is the question. In France the conscription is the source of the army. Every Frenchman, at the age of twenty, is liable to the conscription, which hangs over the heads of the classes who cannot afford the commutation, like a drawn sword.

The conscript is taken from his family, from his pursuits, from his prospects, and obliged to serve for seven years in any part of the world that *la Gloire* may need his arm. He becomes necessarily a soldier, and nothing else; and half a million of such men are a two-edged sword, which may harm the hand that holds it as well as the enemy. By the Prussian system, all its people are required to serve for a term of three years; but their service is limited to the province. Their fellow-soldiers are their neighbors, and they are never far removed from their homes. The French soldier can hardly be anything but a soldier. The Prussian is both citizen and soldier in one. Hence the strength of Prussia in the late war. For in time of war, of course, the army must go where it is wanted during its term of service.

This system, or a modification of it, Bonaparte has proposed introducing into France, so as to give him a force of twelve hundred thousand men. But the patient camel grew restive at the prospect of this back-breaking addition to its burden, and the despot has had to yield to the people. In England recruiting is purely voluntary, and the numbers volunteering are daily diminishing. The various openings to labor of a more profitable kind offered to the classes from which enlisted men are drawn, block the way of the recruiting sergeant. Any system of conscription is abhorrent to the British mind, and especially to the oligarchic mind, as any such would destroy the monopoly the higher classes now have of the commissions, and open promotion to the ranks.

We did not use to sympathize with the spread-eagleism which set up the United States as the model republic. As long as slavery was protected under the folds of its flag, we were inclined to think that it was rather the warning of the world than the model. But now that we have shaken our banner free from that coiling serpent, we are not ashamed to hold it up as a symbol of the better time coming. And our example in the matter, both of armament and disarmament, has been one that the other nations of the earth may well take to heart. We have proved, what indeed our old revolutionary war and the wars of the French Revolution have shown too, that the practice of war is not essential to the excellence of armies. Given reasonably good officers, men very soon learn all that is necessary of the discipline and details of the camp and of the field.

It must be owned that it does seem as if man were born a fighting animal, from the readiness with which he learns and practises the trade. And we have also shown that campaigning for a limited and specific purpose does not unfit men for the pursuits of civil life. But then, to fulfil this condition, there must have been pursuits of civil life before the call to arms. We see all round us men practising law, engaged in trade, ploughing the land, making shoes, painting houses, and the like, who have seen more fighting than Wellington ever did. But then they could do these things first. The solution of this problem lies in one word—education. Prussia, and much more ourselves, have shown that intelligence is the true soul of an army, as of a State, and that the school-house is a much better preparation for war than fighting itself. When education shall be general and intelligence developed, armament will be easy and disarmament safe.

Thaddeus Stevens.

From the Tribune.

The contest for the Senatorship in Pennsylvania has a national significance. We have not ventured to speak, because we have always felt that the States should settle these matters for themselves, without outside interference. But in Pennsylvania the Republican party seem to have a duty, from which it would be timid to shrink, and that is the election of Mr. Stevens as the successor of Mr. Cowan. We are not unmindful of the claims of Mr. Cameron, Governor Curtin, Colonel Forney, and Mr. Grow. Mr. Cameron has been a good Republican, and during the war was considered quite radical. Governor Curtin, as the Chief Executive of the great State of Pennsylvania, showed loyalty and energy. Few Republican leaders have been more courageous than Colonel Forney. He has done true service for the Republican party in Pennsylvania, and did much to elect Geary. We regret that he has retired from the canvass, although most probably his retirement now will make him a strong candidate of the party when it comes to elect the successor of the silent Mr. Buckalew, two years hence. Mr. Grow enters the canvass with all the vigor of 1861, when he stood among the rising statesmen of the Republican party.

We still think, with all appreciation of the services of the distinguished gentlemen named, that Thaddeus Stevens should be elected Senator from Pennsylvania. We say this of Mr. Stevens, although perhaps we have had as many differences with him as with any of our leaders. Our ways have been apart at times. But in choosing a Senator it is not wise to select mere politicians who to-day go this road, and to-morrow another, like ships at sea, who wait for wind and current. It is this foolish temporizing, this accepting of men who talk loudly, in preference to the sturdy and patient soldier who has stood true to his guns for years, that destroys the integrity of a party. It is not much to be a Republican to-day. We take with us now the driftwood and scum. But it was something to be a lover of freedom and protection forty years ago. For forty years Thaddeus Stevens has been the champion of freedom and protection. He has stood by our party when it was a corporal's guard; he leads it now when its columns cover the nation.

It is said that Mr. Stevens is too old. We wish one-half of his colleagues were as young. Venice found a savior in the great Dandolo, and did not feel that his years prevented him from defending the gonfalon of St. Mark's. Pennsylvania need not hesitate to crown with high honors her most illustrious son. The Republican party will always be strong when its captains are selected from veterans who have served it as earnestly and wisely as Thaddeus Stevens.

The Amendment at the North.

From the Times.

The Executives of three great States have delivered themselves of opinions on the pending Constitutional amendment. New York, Pennsylvania, Ohio, each has spoken through its Governor; and the tone of their utterances well merits the attention of the Southern States.

The first point that must challenge notice is the utter absence of malignity on the part of those whose position entitles them to speak in behalf of the Northern people. Neither Governor Fenton, nor Governor Curtin, nor Governor Cox gives expression to aught that can be construed into harshness or malevolence. The fiendish hatred of which Wendell Phillips is a recognized exponent holds no place in the messages of the three Governors who have respectively commended the amendment to the prompt consideration of their Legislatures. The bitterness which the South associates with the demand for the ratification of the amendment has no warrant in aught that Governor Fenton addressed to the legislators of this State.

Nor does Governor Curtin or Governor Cox say anything which the most ingenious torture can pervert into evidence of injustice. On the contrary, the amendment is commended because of its moderation. It is submitted for ratification on the ground that while it seeks to extort nothing like humiliation, it imposes terms which are essential to the assurance of peace and unity in the nation. The general idea expressed is, that the terms are as liberal as is compatible with the ends attained by the war; and that the sincere desire of the North is that, by the acceptance of these terms, the South shall render harsher measures unnecessary. Governor Fenton is explicit as to the sufficiency of the amendment for purposes of restoration. Beyond this he says, substantially, the North has pronounced no preference.

At the same time it is impossible to glance through the messages of the three Governors, as reported, without arriving at the conclusion that the North is thoroughly in earnest in its approval of the amendment, as an embodiment of the most liberal terms that will ever be offered by the victorious States to the conquered South. Their duty, in view of the late elections, is officially to interpret the popular verdict; and while their language relieves the people from the imputation of vindictiveness, it is unmistakable in regard to the firmness which marks the temper of the North. No persecution—they say, in substance—no cruelty towards those whom the chances of war have placed at our mercy; but, on the other hand, no puerile concession, no surrender of results attained, no retracing of ground that has been already won.

The position, as the three Governors state it, is briefly this:—The North, by virtue of its right as the victor in the battle-field, submits the amendment as the embodiment of the least exacting terms which, in its judgment, are essential to national peace and unity. If the South accept these terms—well: The great obstacle to restoration will have been removed, and the South will have in its power the means of resuming its active influence in the national legislature. But if the South, despite all appeals and all warnings, remains obstinate and unyielding—if, on the score of pride or passion, it refuse to ratify the amendment which is offered for its acceptance—the course of the governing States is plain. They will take no step backwards. They will give up none of the principles, none of the advantages which the war has established. And they will take their own method of enforcing the conditions that must precede the re-establishment of recognized authority at the South.

One of the points incidentally mooted by Governor Curtin should warn the Southern States of the fate that is in reserve for them if they disregard the warnings of the time. According to Governor Curtin, the voice of the excluded States counts as nothing for or against the amendment. To render it efficacious the ratification by three-fourths of the States now represented in Congress is all that is necessary. The proposition is not original in this instance. But it is significant of a view which is not destitute of plausibility, and which implies the reduction of the now excluded States to something resembling a territorial condition.

If the South is wise it will not be indifferent to these manifestations of Northern opinion. Concerning the statements of newspapers it may be in doubt, but the averments of three Governors ought not to be passed over without candid considerations.

Currency Dodges.

From the Tribune.

When Congress resumes business, we may look for new and old devices for prolonging and perpetuating a vicious and unsound currency by the infinite dodges and sleight-of-hand tricks of vicious and unsound legislation. When, in the agony of our great struggle, we were driven to the desperate resort of making the promises of our Government a legal-tender for the sums specified on their face, no one suggested or imagined that this was to be justified otherwise than by dire necessity, or endured one moment longer than necessity should compel. The notice that the people might be enriched by the persistent use of "a false balance" in the purchase and sale of their products and commodities—by the compulsory employment of a dollar in their dealings which would be worth from forty to ninety cents according to circumstances, and which the tricks of gold gamblers and kite-flyers should cause to fluctuate in value from day to day—is of far more recent origin.

The "legal-tender" paper dollar has served its purpose. Born of our national agony, it should have died with it. There is not a financier fit to manage the smallest village bank who does not know that the Government might have resumed specie payment directly after the surrender of the Rebel armies—far more easily then than now, or hereafter. Of course, some high-flying speculators would have been pinched, as many more will be whenever we move in earnest towards resumption; but the country would have imported two or three hundred millions' worth less of foreign wares and fabrics since May, 1865, than it has done, and would have exported less of our national debt by the like amount. The sale since peace of our Government bonds to European capitalists at fifty to seventy-five cents on the dollar, to be paid in full, principal and interest, by our children and grandchildren, is one of the direct and disastrous results of our insane persistence in the use of a fallacious, juggling currency.

We are opposed to all the bills now before Congress, or yet to be presented, which aim at the perpetuation of an irredeemable currency. They are all wrong in purpose; so that they cannot be other than unsound in their provisions. All the legislation now needed is a short act of this tenor:—"A bill to provide for the Resumption of Specie Payment. §1. The Secretary of the Treasury is hereby authorized to borrow, from time to time, at the most favorable rates which may be attainable by advertising for bids in open market, such sums as may be necessary to enable him to resume and maintain specie payment."

—Armed with the power thus given him, let the Secretary simply give public notice that the treasury notes and postal currency (ugh!) of the United States are henceforth redeemable in coin when presented in even $100's at the Treasury of the United States in Washington, between the hours of 12 and 2 P. M. of each business day, and that said treasury notes and postal currency will henceforth be received as coin in all payments to the United States, whether for duties on imports or otherwise.

—Well, why not?

Do you say that everybody would rush to the Treasury for specie? What would be the motive, the inducement? The gold-gambler's occupation would be gone from the moment that notice was given. The two or three hundred millions of gold or silver coin or bars now lying dead in the country would at once be added to our circulating medium. The one hundred millions per annum that our mines are producing—and which every year is increasing—would all be money instead of merchandise from the hour of its coinage, if no sooner. The one hundred millions of specie now held by the Government might at first be heavily drawn upon; but to what end? The gold so drawn would not be annihilated, and precious little of it would go out of the country; for prices would fall, and importations be light for some time after resumption. Those who drew the gold from the treasury would not annihilate it; when they found that they had not broken the Government, they would very soon want to set it to earning them something. Being just equal in value to greenbacks or national bank notes, and not half so convenient for business uses, it would either run back into the Treasury or find its way into the banks; which, being authorized to pay their notes in greenbacks, would generally prefer these to coin, though they would keep both for the accommodation of their customers. Never was it easier to maintain specie payments in this country than now. It is sheer cowardice—nay, it is knavish, gambling speculation—that makes a bugaboo of resumption.

We do not need any currency tinkering—any arbitrary withdrawal of greenbacks or of National Bank notes. Make the National Banks redeem their notes at par at some central point; redeem the greenbacks in gold where any one chooses to present them, and the currency may be safely left to regulate itself. If the National Banks shall prove unsound, the people will refuse their notes and force them into liquidation; if greenbacks are not as good as gold, they will follow the bank notes. But this will not be, simply, because our existing currency needs but specie payment and central redemption to make it the best in the world. We, for example, are doing a business of $1,000,000 per annum, which would hardly be done at all on a purely specie currency. Both greenbacks and National Bank notes, being redeemable at par, are better to us than gold—we should probably never present a dollar of either for redemption. And what is true of our business is true of most other peoples'.

Even if some competent Court should decide that—the war and its necessities being ended—legal-tender is no longer legal, it would be of no practical consequence; for the greenbacks would thenceforth circulate on their merits, not by virtue of Government compulsion. In Montana, Nevada, Idaho, and Colorado, they would often, if not always, command a premium over gold, because equally valuable and far more convenient for remittance. Whether there is too much, too little, or just enough currency in the country, resumption would speedily determine; and if foreigners (as is absurdly imagined) should see fit to send our bonds home and sell them at a sacrifice for gold (as they can do now or at any time), why so much the better. Better pinch ourselves a little to pay them now at a heavy discount than be obliged to pay them ultimately in full.

Oh for courage and foresight in the regulation and management of our currency!

The War Cloud in the East.

From the Herald.

The clouds of war which lately convulsed Central Europe with their thunder have scarcely passed away before another cloud arises in the East. The world moves rapidly nowadays. Steam and electricity seem to exercise a wonderful quickening influence in the moral and political world as well as in the physical. No "thirty years'" war is possible now. Empires are overthrown or created in a few days. Institutions crystallized by time, and fortified by the genius and labors of a hundred generations, are swept away like cobwebs. Conservatism will soon become an obsolete word. Progress, either in remodelling the ancient order of things or in creating a new one, is the controlling idea of the age, and no institutions that stand in the way can long exist. The Turkish empire in Europe stands in the way of this progress—of the march of European civilization, and its fate is sealed. Feudalism received its deathblow at the birth of the great American republic, and in the revolutions which upheaved society at the close of the last and the beginning of the present century.

Although a remnant still remains in Great Britain and in some parts of the European Continent, it is greatly modified and controlled by the popular voice, and is fast dying out. The idea of government by divine right or by privileged orders has become obsolete. Everywhere the principle of self-government, as recognized by conceding the right of suffrage to the people, is acknowledged. Serfdom is abolished in Russia, and that great empire is closely following the progressive civilization of Central and Western Europe. Priestly domination, which has been enthroned a thousand years at the ancient capital of the world, has fallen with the temporal power of the Papacy through the progress of liberal ideas. Even the most bigoted religious populations are emancipating themselves from priestly influences. All over Europe, except in Turkey, the spirit of progress is changing the face and condition of society.

We see, however, in the fairest portion of Europe, washed by the Mediterranean, the Adriatic, and the Euxine, and traversed in part by the Danube, in the land of ancient historic greatness and genius, where the arts of war and peace attained their highest development—we see in that beautiful and fruitful country a semi-barbarous and anti-Christian Government inimical to the enlightened progress of the age. It is under the blighting rule of the Ottomans. Mahometanism, with its effete institutions, cruel despotism, blind intolerance, and paralyzing fatalism, stands as an insuperable barrier to improvement. Worse than that, there are eleven millions of Christians who have to bear the yoke of this infidel power—of a Government more suited to the deserts of Arabia or the interior of Africa than to civilized Europe. Such a state of things is a strange anomaly in these enlightened times.

Can we be surprised, then, at the insurrection in Candia, at the intense excitement and movements in Greece and at the mutterings of revolt in Servia and among other Christian populations of European Turkey? It is said in Western Europe that Russia secretly foments these insurrectionary movements among the Christian subjects of the Porte to promote her own ambitious ends. There may be some truth in this, and it is quite natural that the people of Russia should sympathize with their co-religionists under Mahometan rule. Still we know that Russian influence and progress in the East is the bugbear of the press and statesmen of Europe, and of England and France in particular, and the action of Russia, if there be any, may be much exaggerated. Apart, however, from Russian designs or action, there is ample cause, as we have shown, for revolution among the Christian subjects of the Sultan.

The greatest efforts are being made by several of the powers of Europe to keep insurrectionary movements in check and to maintain the integrity of the Turkish empire. England and France, as every one is aware, made war on Russia a few years ago, in what is called the Crimean war, to sustain the Sultan against supposed danger from Russia. That war did give strength for a few years to the Ottoman Government. Had Turkey not been sustained by such powerful foreign aid, her rule in Europe would have been utterly destroyed. To two of the greatest Christian powers must be ascribed the continuance of the blighting influence of Mahometan rule over eleven millions of Christians, and over the fairest portion of Europe. But, after a few years, the results of that costly and bloody war in the Crimea are being effaced by the fresh revival of the "Eastern question." It is in the nature of things irrepressible—it cannot be kept down. Whether Russia does intrigue or not in the affairs of the Christian population of Turkey, these populations and the Christian world will never be satisfied till the Ottomans are driven out. There will be insurrections, and this will be the end in spite of armed evolutions or diplomatic manœuvring.

Every day we are receiving some news by the Atlantic cable or by mail about that part of the world. It has become, really, the prominent question of the day. France and England have frowned at the Cretans and warned the Greeks, and they are watching the Russians with intense interest. But all this does not appear to prevent the determined resistance of the Christian subjects of Turkey to Ottoman rule, and cannot long prevent the breaking-up of the Turkish empire. European powers are evidently afraid of the movement. With them humanity, liberty, religion, civilization, progress, or anything else, is made subservient to the political question—to the balance or preponderance of power in and along the Mediterranean, the Dardanelles, the Euxine, and the Adriatic. The international question is the paramount one. Under these circumstances the question naturally arises, what will be the end of this complication?

Will the powers of Western Europe, will France and England, again draw the sword to maintain the Ottoman Government on the European continent? England is unwilling to take such a step, and therefore, hopes to stave off the trouble, though she has, or believes she has, the greatest interest at stake. She dreads having her empire in India exposed through the advances of Russia in that direction; but she is tired of war, and feels the necessity of peace. France has less at stake, but is more active, and may be disposed to go farther, from an inherent pride of meddling in or regulating the affairs of Europe. Austria would probably join another English-French alliance, if that could be formed, with the hope of checking Russia on her border, of preserving herself, and, if possible, of gaining a portion of the effects of the sick man. But it is doubtful whether another alliance can be formed powerful enough to save Turkey.

In the extremity of the case, a general European Congress may meet and create independent governments in European Turkey. This might avert a general and great war. If the question cannot be settled by a Congress, one of two things must occur, either a great war or the advance of Russian power towards the Mediterranean and Golden Horn. The question is now beginning to loom up above all others, and we on this side the Atlantic, while not taking an active part in it, shall watch the progress of events with great interest.

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