

THE NEW YORK PRESS.

EDITORIAL OPINIONS OF THE LEADING JOURNALS UPON CURRENT TOPICS—COMPILED EVERY DAY FOR THE EVENING TELEGRAPH.

The Art of Giving.

From the Tribune. The present is denounced by a great many philosophers, and not a few poets, as a grossly material age, joined to the idols of the Exchange, and given up to making money. There is in this a certain truth which is by no means a discouraging one. War no longer being the main business of mankind and the safety-valve of superfluous human energy, production and commerce have taken its place, to the great disgust of the manufacturers of verses. There is an end, say they, of high aim and generous purposes, and the world has grown altogether selfish and sordid. We cannot help thinking that it will do these grumblers good to read the newspapers. What is more military than the unconnected patriotism worth when compared with the reputation which Mr. George Peabody, a plain merchant, has established for centuries, simply by giving away his money judiciously? Admitting the occasional value of war, Mr. Peabody does that kindly and gracefully which the Wellingtons and Bonapartes did cruelly and coarsely. With our little knowledge of history, we do not remember a period with such a power, and we may say passion, for giving as the present. Our charity, too, it must be remembered, is tolerably independent of ecclesiastical stimulus. Dying men now give, it is true, to religion, but they do not think that they will be damned for not giving; nor does the Church get all, and other proper objects of liberality comparatively nothing. Alms-giving in the nineteenth century is catholic in the best sense of the word; and while our wealthy men do not forget meeting-houses and the missionaries, they remember the value of convenient tenements, hospitals, baths, libraries, picture galleries, and universities for teaching something besides theology. There is an established habit of giving. The public are expected to bestow, and capitalists, living or dying, to found something.

When a rich man—rich enough, we mean, to be notable—is gathered to his fathers, the world, sure that it is coming in for a legacy, opens its ears to hear the will read, and the reporters go up to the probate office to take notes and to publish them. It is to the credit of human nature, it is the sufficient refutation of the Rochester funds and the Swift, it is a proof that the old parsimony of the drama is no longer common, when we find a custom of benevolence established, and a tacit admission on the part of Cæsar that he holds his gold in trust for his fellow-creatures.

But the most lavish generosity is nothing, except by accident, unless wisely directed. He who funds a hospital for cats must look to the cats for gratitude. It is the crowning glory of our modern charity that it walks hand in hand with science and letters, and seeks nothing so fervently as to make men wiser, and happier, and better.

There are many things in themselves extremely desirable which must be hopelessly out of the reach of the poor, however industrious and virtuous, unless the wealthy make them accessible; and among these we may reckon books in large collections, museums of art and science, picture galleries, and parks. When a rich man recognizes the value of these, we may be sure that cent per cent has not altogether hardened his heart nor obscured his brain. If some of these things are not according to his tastes and habits, he submits to be advised, waives his own prejudices, and defers to the judgment of those who may be more enlightened than himself. Such a concession (which we suppose Mr. Girard and Mr. Astor both made) to the higher opinions of mankind proves that money-getting and money-hoarding are not incompatible with generous emotions and elevated views. The real, genuine, traditional old hunk is going out of fashion, and we trust in fifty years more will become as extinct as the mastodons and the megatheriums. For this, in America, at least, we are indebted to the liberality of the laws of primogeniture and entail, and to the delightful impossibility which here exists of founding a family. This wise feature of our legislation has made the rich man what he ought to be—the servant, the benefactor, the Good Samaritan of society. He toils for the power and the pleasure of making a will which shall diffuse happiness, increase social comfort, and promote the morals and the manners of his race. If he can do this he may consider himself eminently favored of fortune. There are many poor men to whom the gods have not given the gift of gathering to no impatient outcry of their material mediocrity when they keenly feel how much it lessens their power of doing good. To these, however, is left the rich consolation of that blessing which is bestowed upon those who "do what they can."

It is, as we have said, a fashion now to be benevolent. When the historian of these days in which we live shall record our successes and our shortcomings, what we did and what we left undone, he will be forced by his very materials to recognize the liberality and the charity which are characteristics of our age; and, if he finds no individual distinguished and prominent, like Howard, Clarkson, Wilberforce, or Elizabeth Fry, it will be because the law of kindness has touched so many hearts, and a wise benevolence has opened so many purses and so many hands.

Soldiers on the Situation.

From the Times. The "summer soldiers and sunshine patriots" are the great obstacles to reconciliation in both sections. The less their familiarity with saltpetre, the more fierce are they in invective, and the more ferocious in their demands. Having kept out of harm's way when real danger was to be incurred, they are now valiant in their vows, and their talk sounds like thunder. At the North they insist upon the right of the conqueror to hang and despoil. At the South they declaim against concession, spurn the idea of peace, and swagger with an insolence truly savage. Of all the outcry for punishment and congenial exclusion, how much proceeds from genuine heroism, and how much from the impetuosity of every man who stands in his way—but Butler, Sherman, too, wants peace on the basis of mutual concession; Butler will have none of it. The soldiers who conquered the South—who did the fighting, encountered the dangers, and finally extinguished the rebellion—are, generally speaking, anxious for the restoration of the South to its share in the Government, and seek no more severe exactions than are necessary to satisfy the re-

quirements of the loyal States. They are, almost to a man, content with the basis now laid down, and would deprecate new conditions or harsher penalties. The trouble comes from "bomb-proof" brigadiers, and gallants who wear shoulder-straps they did not fairly earn. To this aspect of the case the South presents a counterpart. There, as here, fiery words are uttered, defiance and denunciation are indulged, and appeals to Southern spirit are urged with persistent fervor. Pride and honor are invoked, and the people are told to confront Yankee vandalism with Spartan endurance. The talkers all the time are sheer impostors—creatures who carried on rebellion in the recesses of a printing office, with no fear of draft before their eyes, or who profited by the opportunities of Jeff. Davis' reign to do Government service beyond the roar of cannon. The genuine soldiers are taking their positions on the other side. Chalmers and Wade Hampton were heard from many days ago. Lee has spoken more recently and more authoritatively. He desires no renewal of rebellion. He sees nothing in the conditions of the Reconstruction act which the South may not and should not accept. Its oath to him is no obstacle; it may be taken by every Southern man, he thinks, without sacrifice of self-respect.

If Lee's counsel determine the course of Virginia, that State will be one of the first to regain its place in the Union. And now we have tidings of Dick Taylor and Longstreet—the fine specimens of the Southern soldier, and whose views will outweigh those of the Georgia Jenkinses wherever Southern feeling predominates. Taylor has for months labored as a peace-maker. He was present at the Philadelphia Convention, and soon thereafter became satisfied that the South could not too quickly comply with the conditions demanded by the North. He would have ratified the Constitutional Amendment then; he would comply with the terms of the law now. He is at present in Washington as a representative of the Louisiana Legislature, upon whose members he has pressed the duty and expediency of acknowledging the facts of the situation. To his influence, it is said, Wade Hampton's change of opinion is in part attributable. Longstreet's letter places him above the chance of misrepresentation. No false pride blinds him to the stern reality. "The striking feature," he writes, "and the one that our people should keep in view, is that we are a conquered people." From this starting-point his reasoning is clear.

"Accept the terms," is the sum of his advice, which he conveys in no humiliating manner. "We have made an honest, and I hope that I may say, a creditable fight, but we have lost. Let us come forward, then, and accept the ends involved in the struggle." Brave words, bravely spoken. The General does not trouble himself concerning the possibilities of bad faith on the part of Congress. He will not concede their existence, because he cannot admit that the representative men of a great nation could make "the pledge they have made, and then break it." The duty of the South, at any rate, as Longstreet sees it, is plain. "Let us accept the terms as we are in duty bound to do, and if there is a lack of good faith, let it be upon others."

The influence of these utterances must be great throughout the South. Lee, Longstreet, Taylor, Chalmers, Hampton—what combination of mere politicians shall avail as against these men among the Southern population? The New Orleans Times, to whose editor Longstreet addressed his letter, remarks that his views "are generally entertained by gentlemen of his class and position." The time is not distant, we confidently believe, when they will receive the practical endorsement of the excluded States.

Napoleon and Bismarck.

From the Herald. Our cable announcements for the last few days in regard to certain deeply significant movements on the part of Prussia and France have naturally created not a little excitement. On the one hand we learn that, by means of treaties concluded with Bavaria, Wurtemberg, and the grand duchy of Baden, Prussia has put herself in a position in which she will be able to command the entire military strength of the South German Confederation. On the other hand, we are told that the Emperor Napoleon favors a confederation of the Governments of France, Holland, Belgium, and Switzerland against Prussia, and that the recent movements of France engendered in France considerable bitterness of feeling—a bitterness of feeling which has doubtless been increased by a knowledge of the fact that King Leopold of Belgium refuses to enter into the Emperor's proposed confederation.

Prussia and France are assuming more and more the attitude of antagonists. We do not mean that there is danger of an immediate collision. But both on the one side and on the other there is a visible struggle for supremacy and an unceasing anxiety to be ready for any emergency. It is curious to see how, in this, as in other matters, Bismarck has successfully reduced to practice the teachings of Napoleon. Napoleon was the first to proclaim the doctrine of united nationalities; Bismarck was the first to turn that doctrine to practical account. Napoleon was the first to announce the theory that henceforward in Europe the safety of the smaller powers was to consist in entering into alliances, offensive and defensive with their larger and more powerful neighbors. Here again, as in the former case, Bismarck has been the first to exhibit the doctrine in practical shape. In this last affair, indeed, the master has been compelled to imitate the pupil. Bismarck forms military alliances with the smaller adjoining States. Napoleon sees that his interest lies in adopting a similar policy. In the one case, however, the experiment has been successful; whether it will be equally so in the other our most recent intelligence makes it appear doubtful. The game which Napoleon and Bismarck have been playing, and which may be said to have commenced at the celebrated Biarritz meeting and Keon. The moves which they have respectively made on the political chess-board have commanded the attention of the world. That skill and caution, and daring have been manifested on both sides all must admit. If Napoleon has more than once been checked, it is to be borne in mind, first of all, that while his opponent has been yielding up his entire energies to the attainment of one end, he has, unfortunately, been engaged throughout in more than one, and, secondly, that this game has not yet been concluded. The result, in fact, is as yet doubtful.

It is by no means improbable that before the game is played out it may assume a much more serious character. The difficulties unsolved by diplomacy may have to be referred to the arbitration of the sword. In the event of Prussia and France coming into open collision, so numerous are the contingencies in which the result is dependent, that he would be a bold man who should venture to predict beforehand to which side victory would lean.

Prussia is undoubtedly a powerful military nation. The number, the rapidity, the brilliancy of her successes in her recent encounter with Austria, proved that to the greatest of modern powers she would be a dangerous antagonist. But Prussia since then has added many millions to her population, has enlarged her territory, and has proportionally increased her forces. Not only so. By the alliances which she has formed with the members of the Southern Confederation, she has acquired the entire military control of the whole of Germany, with the exception of those provinces which still remain attached to the House of Austria. Nor is this all. In the altered and rapidly altering condition of the Austrian empire it requires, we believe, but the occasion to reveal the fact that the German population there are as enthusiastically devoted to the interests of their common nation, as are the Germans of the North and South. Such is the position of Prussia at the present moment. Formidable as an antagonist before, the presumption is that she would be found greatly more formidable now. Powerful, however, as Prussia undoubtedly is, it is not to be denied that in a war with France she would labor under many and serious disadvantages. Not to speak of population, of wealth, of unequalled military resources and of great military renown, France has the unspeakable advantage of being united, and of moving with the accuracy of a machine under the guidance and control of a powerful central will. Prussia, on the other hand, fine specimens of the Southern soldier, and whose views will outweigh those of the Georgia Jenkinses wherever Southern feeling predominates. Taylor has for months labored as a peace-maker. He was present at the Philadelphia Convention, and soon thereafter became satisfied that the South could not too quickly comply with the conditions demanded by the North. He would have ratified the Constitutional Amendment then; he would comply with the terms of the law now. He is at present in Washington as a representative of the Louisiana Legislature, upon whose members he has pressed the duty and expediency of acknowledging the facts of the situation. To his influence, it is said, Wade Hampton's change of opinion is in part attributable. Longstreet's letter places him above the chance of misrepresentation. No false pride blinds him to the stern reality. "The striking feature," he writes, "and the one that our people should keep in view, is that we are a conquered people." From this starting-point his reasoning is clear.

Henry Clay.

From the World. On the 12th of April, the nineteenth anniversary of Henry Clay's birthday is to be marked at Louisville by the inauguration of a statue. Robert C. Winthrop is to deliver the address, and ex-President Fillmore and Alexander H. Stephens are expected to be present. The Tribune cannot let slip the occasion of making flings at these three gentlemen, and affects to regard it as an incongruous thing that they should be assigned the leading part in honors to the memory of Mr. Clay. It seems to think these duties should have been discharged by men who abetted the Republican party in the late civil war, and approved of its being converted into an engine of abolition. It would puzzle the Tribune to make a fitter selection. There is no man in the country whose culture, eloquence, and historical turn of mind better qualify him to make a graceful address on this commemorative occasion than Mr. Winthrop. He was always a warm admirer of Mr. Clay, and he served as Speaker of the House of Representatives when Mr. Clay was the leader of the Whig party, and while Mr. Clay's favorite measures were most strenuously debated. Mr. Fillmore was Chairman of the Ways and Means Committee that prepared the tariff of 1842, and by his ability on that occasion, won Mr. Clay's lasting friendship and esteem. In 1848 Mr. Clay strongly recommended Mr. Fillmore as the Whig candidate for the Vice Presidency; and in 1852 he expressed a vigorous preference for him as the Whig candidate for the Presidency over Mr. Webster and General Scott. With regard to Mr. Stephens, it was proper that some distinguished Southern statesman should be invited to take a leading part in dedicating a statue to a Southern statesman in a Southern State; and we are at a loss to know whom the Tribune would select in preference to Mr. Stephens, the ablest Southern Whig in the House in the flood-tide of the Whig policy.

It is not, however, on personal, but on political grounds that the Tribune demurs. It tries to make it appear that Mr. Clay's principles, had he lived, would have led him straight into the present Republican party, while Messrs. Winthrop, Fillmore, and Stephens are arrant Copperheads, or worse. But the Tribune seems to forget that the "parting of the wave" between the Whigs of its stripe and Mr. Clay began previous to 1850; that Mr. Clay was the chief architect and advocate of the Compromise Law, for whose execution Mr. Fillmore was so bitterly denounced; and that his preference of Mr. Fillmore for the Presidency two years afterwards, and the contempt for Mr. Seward expressed in his private correspondence, make it improbable that he would have co-operated with Seward and the Tribune in building up the Republican party. His principles were as opposite to theirs as light is to darkness.

The Tribune classes Mr. Clay as an Abolitionist, inasmuch as he favored emancipation in Kentucky. The abolition of slavery in a State by the voluntary action of its own people and authorities is quite a different thing from breaking down the State Governments and forcing negro equality upon the people at the point of the bayonet. Mr. Clay neither held these high notions of Federal prerogative, nor desired the sudden abolition of slavery. He expressed his disapproval, publicly in the Senate and privately in his correspondence, of General Jackson's unification proclamation. "As to the proclamation," he said, "although there were some good things in it, there are some entirely too ugly to mention, and I cannot stomach it." Mr. Clay again and again declared his steady approbation of, and adherence to the doctrines of the famous Virginia resolutions, which are cited down by the Tribune as the serpent's egg out of which secession was hatched. Here is his creed as expressed in 1851 in a private letter to a friend: "I need not say to you that my constitutional doctrines are those of the epoch of 1798. I am against all power to execute what is not necessary and proper to execute what is delegated. I hold to the principles of Mr. Madison as promulgated through the Virginia Legislature. I was with Mr. Madison then; I am with him now." As to the proper treatment of States in revolt, Mr. Clay differed quite as pointedly from the Republican doctrines of the present day. He thought General Jackson too harsh in his mode of dealing with South Carolina, and under his lead, the tariff was softened to conciliate her. "State I repeat that I think that South Carolina has been wronged, in temperate, and greatly in my other member of this Union." And in another speech he said: "If this unhappy contest is to continue, I sincerely hope that the future conduct of the Administration may be governed by wise and cautious counsels and a paternal forbearance." For Mr. Clay's views of slavery and the relations of the Federal Government to it, we refer the Tribune to his soothing reply to Mr. Mendallin, in which "the political Abolitionists," as Mr. Clay called them, who waged war on Southern slavery in the name of the Declaration of In-

dependence, were scourged as with a whip of scorpions. We thank the Tribune for calling up these reminiscences. Nothing could more strikingly show how widely the Government has departed from the old landmarks.

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SHIRTS