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

General Butler's Report

General Butler's report to the Committee of Congress in regard to the exchange of prisoners during the war is a document of unusual interest. We find that in 1863 the Rebels held 15,000 of our men who were dying of cold and starvation, while the 25,000 Rebels held by the United States were well taken care of. General Butler and the Secretary of War proposed to treat the Rebel officers in our hands precisely as our men were treated in Libby, but this plan was abandoned after consultation with General Grant. General Butler, in December, was appointed Commissioner of Exchange, and found the Confederate generals anxious to exchange, man for man, but that the Confederate Government refused to treat with General Butler on the ground that he commanded negro troops. Notification to that effect was sent to our Government, which refused, of course, to admit the right of the Confederate authorities to outlaw our officers. Exchanges continued till March, 1864, when General Butler had an interview with Mr. Ould, which convinced him that retaliation would compel the Rebels to abandon their refusal to exchange colored soldiers. The Government, informed of these facts, referred the matter to General Grant, who, in April, directed General Butler to decline, until otherwise ordered, all further negotiations, and shortly afterwards instructed him to consider the determination of the Rebels to make a distinction between white and colored prisoners as a refusal on their part to agree to further exchange. General Butler was also instructed to receive all the sick and wounded the Rebels would give up, but to send no more in exchange. In August the Rebels offered to renew the exchange, man for man. General Grant then telegraphed the following important order:—"It is hard on our men held in Southern prisons not to exchange them, but it is humbler to those left in the ranks to fight our battles. Every man released on parole or otherwise becomes an active soldier against us at once, either directly or indirectly. If we commence a system of exchange which liberates all prisoners taken, we will have to fight on until the whole South is exterminated. If we hold those caught, they amount to no more than dead men. At this particular time, to release all Rebel prisoners North would insure Sherman's defeat, and would compromise our safety here." In the meanwhile, General Butler, learning that colored prisoners were employed as laborers by the Rebels, notified their Commissioner that an equal or greater number of their men should be so employed in our service, and this action was approved by General Grant. In October, 1864, General Butler directed Colonel Mulford to proceed to Savannah with a fleet to carry the Rebel sick, and bring back our own—an exchange of about 12,000 of our men. In November, Colonel Mulford informed General Butler that he was detained at Fortress Monroe by the want of transportation, and that the sufferings of our men at Savannah were fearfully increased by the delay. General Butler in reply ordered him to start at once, to yield to no subordinate interference—to yield to nothing but armed force, and not to that if he could meet it. These are the main facts which the report presents in regard to the responsibility of the failure to exchange prisoners, and they will certainly command no ordinary attention.

The Mission of the Republican Party in the South.

We cannot share the tone of exultation in which many of our contemporaries discuss the result of the Tennessee election. In its overwhelming vote for Brownlow and his candidates they profess to have discovered signs of thorough reconstruction. And in the unanimity of the negroes they see an assurance of the manner in which the newly enfranchised race throughout the South will hereafter exert their power.

If the mission of the Republican party were to invest the future of the South with danger and difficulty, this rejoicing would be intelligible and just. If the aim were to build up a black party in the Southern States as the only proper ally of the Northern Republicans—to alienate the great majority of resident whites and force them into a position of permanent hostility—nothing could be more satisfactory than the verdict of Tennessee. Or if incurable Rebellion were assumed to be the lot of four-fifths of the whites, and proscription and insult the only treatment they are entitled to, we could understand the wisdom of holding up Tennessee tactics for imitation in the ten excluded States. From these points of view, the Tennessee election would justify all the rejoicing which it has elicited. It would warrant the exclamation, "Tennessee redeemed!" with which more than one enthusiastic journalist introduced the news. And it would enable us to comprehend the calculation by which the same writers prove the certain and lasting success of their party as a consequence of reconstruction.

But we have not so learned the principles and aims of the Republican party, nor so interpreted the object and end of its reconstruction policy. On the contrary, we have believed the mission of the party to be beneficent as well as patriotic. To its own future it cannot be indifferent, but that is dependent less upon ordinary partisan appliances than upon the good feeling and sound judgment with which it pursues its work, and the success which crowns its labors. Party advantages are to be incidental to success—not the end of all efforts. The speedy reorganization of the South on a healthy basis—the earliest possible reconstruction of local governments, and the reestablishment of local authority—constitutes the only legitimate purpose of recent legislation. In this sense it is understood and supported by the country. It is, moreover, a policy of conciliation, of forbearance, of amity and peace. Proscription nowhere enters into the plan through which it operates. It guarantees to the blacks perfect civil and political liberty, but without imposing exclusion upon the whites. The disabilities provided for prominent Rebels and the disfranchisement of the office-holding class are exceptions too limited to diminish the force of the rule, the obvious design of which is to obliterate distinctions of race, and to make the whole community interested in the smooth and successful working of the reconstructed governments. The law, too, runs evenly, with no risk of caprice or passion on the part of its administrators. Its whole scope and principle is directed to the maintenance of justice or equality, the organization of repub-

lican liberty, secured by forms adapted to a transition time, but affording no room for the diabolical vindictiveness and cunning of the measures by which Brownlow has fortified himself in office.

Nor is our version of the law or our rendering of the Republican policy fanciful or singular. The most influential leaders of the party in Congress have committed themselves to views identical with those we have expressed. Yet more recently Senator Wilson, in his Saratoga speech, disclaimed all desire for proscription or punishment. Recognizing reconstruction as already assured, he declared his readiness to welcome the Southern people back "with warm and generous greetings," trusting that "in the future we shall be friends and brothers as we were in the morning of the republic." In the same genuine Republican spirit, Gov. Pierpont avows the object of his endeavors in Virginia to be "to combine all white men and black men," and on the broad ground of moderation and right to construct "the great national Republican party of the country." John Minor Botts, rising superior to the promptings of personal wrong, proposes "general amnesty and restoration of all civil and political rights to the rank and file of the (Rebel) army, and to the great body of the people." It is not necessary, however, to multiply these citations. The law itself, the avowals that accompanied its enactments, and the remarks of almost the entire Republican press, together prove that the party cannot be fairly held responsible for the deplorable state of affairs in Tennessee, or for the extravagant utterances and demands of demagogues who speak in its name in other portions of the South.

Judged by the standard set up by the Republican party in Congress and generally throughout the North, the election in Tennessee furnishes cause of mortification and regret, rather than of boasting and hope. The men elected may call themselves Republicans, but they owe their triumph to agencies in direct conflict with the principles and policy of the party they represent, not less than to the determination of the masses of the South to counteract the extravagances of the Unionists and their white allies, and to prevent the repetition of scenes at once so farcical and disgusting as those of the late "Mass Convention" at Richmond. Neither for party nor patriotic considerations is it desirable that the Southern wing of the Republican organization should be permitted to be almost exclusively black. Unless the pacification of the South is to be abandoned as hopeless, the confidence and cooperation of that large body of whites who are anxious to seek peace and restoration should be cultivated sedulously. The aspect of the registration lists is a sufficient cause of alarm, without the addition of needless proscription and wanton arrogance. Even under the most favorable circumstances, we fear that the majorities by whom the State conventions will be controlled will be black. Where this disparity arises from the refusal of whites to register, they only can be held accountable for the result. If, having votes, they refuse to exercise them, they must thank themselves for negro supremacy. It is for the managers of the Republican canvass to be careful lest they increase the disparity by countenancing the extravagances of the worthless demagogues who address themselves exclusively to the negroes. There are tens of thousands of white citizens in the Southern States whose cooperation may be secured, if the responsible guides and leaders of the party firmly and consistently maintain the conciliatory temper and the just and moderate principles which have thus far distinguished its official action.

They have achieved a virtual independence, and do not conceal their desire to use the earliest opportunity for cutting the last tie which binds them to the hated Mohammedan Empire. They are eager for a new contest, and will hardly resist the temptation to improve the favorable opportunity which a war between Turkey and Greece would afford them. The reports of the most trustworthy travellers and the tone of the newspapers published by the several Christian tribes in Turkey make it, at least, highly probable that the immense majority of the entire Christian population of Turkey will be in open sympathy with Greece. In European Turkey, where the Mohammedans count only 4,000,000, against 11,500,000 Christians, a general alliance of the Christians with the Greeks could hardly fail to result soon in the total expulsion of the Turks. It is, therefore, no mad attempt on the part of little Greece to risk a war against Turkey for the deliverance and annexation of Crete. She has reasonable hopes for success as long as no foreign power interferes in behalf of Turkey. This, as the diplomatic history of the Eastern question during the past two years clearly shows, is not to be expected; on the contrary, there is almost a certainty of Greece having from the start powerful allies. The Government of Russia has long demanded from Turkey, in threatening notes, the cession of Crete to Greece; and the Russian people would hail with intense delight a declaration of war. The Prussian Government has repeatedly and emphatically declared its entire concurrence with the policy of Russia in the Eastern question. Austria, France, and England have, at least, given the Turks no hope of aid in case of a new Eastern war, but have repeatedly joined Russia and Prussia in urging upon the Porte the necessity of making concessions to the Christian provinces. Thus Greece has much greater reason to hope for aid from abroad than Turkey.

The Secretary of War Declines the President's Invitation to Resign.

Mr. Stanton has declined the President's invitation to resign. "Grave public considerations," he writes, in reply to the President's letter, "constrain me to continue in the position of Secretary of War until the next meeting of Congress." In some circumstances it would seem a mere matter of propriety and personal dignity, that a member of a ministry should retire when his views of public policy were no longer in harmony with the views of his official associates, and more particularly when he held a position of direct antagonism with the constitutional Executive. In this view, therefore—which is indeed the true view of the courtesies and proprieties of the relations of a Cabinet officer in their natural state—a letter should hardly be called for; a man's own perceptions should carry him out of office. But this would be a narrow view of the case to take at the present time, and the country must regretfully acknowledge that this delicacy would be worse than wasted on Mr. Johnson.

He would not only misunderstand this conduct, but he would dangerously abuse the position in which such a course would place him; for we are of opinion that the suggestion of devolving Mr. Stanton's duties on General Grant does not indicate the Secretary's purpose. This is an idea, actually thrown out to soothe the public mind in view of the inevitable change—to render the people less dissatisfied with the notion of getting Stanton out of the way; for as Grant is accepted as the staunchest champion of popular rights, the hint that he will succeed to the Secretary's duties is expected to spread the idea that the present irreconcilable trouble between Johnson and Stanton is not owing to any difference in principle relating to reconstruction, but rather to such smaller matters as personal pique. This is the purpose of the statement that Stanton will give way to Grant. It is to commend the change to the country; while behind it, no doubt, is a real intention to put in Mr. Stanton's place a man who can be used as an easy tool in a new game for the obstruction of the Congressional plan for the restoration of the States.

Mr. Stanton has held to his place through many storms with peculiar tenacity, and he must now take his cue in his relations with the Executive from the course of Congress. In passing the Tenure of Office bill Congress declared its want of confidence in the President. It declared that the safety of the country would not permit that it should retain the power which usage and the law had alike assigned to his office, and it tied his hands by a law against which no respectable protest was heard. That law was intended to cover just such a case as this, and Mr. Stanton must stand upon it now. His resignation would be just what the President and his party most desire; for they have so little confidence in their case that they fear to push it to a direct issue. Let Mr. Stanton rest distinctly on the law, that we may see and know what there is in it, and have nothing covered up. In view of the threatenings that have been hurled against Stanton and Sheridan, we doubt if the President will dare to follow up his game if he finds the Secretary resolute and determined to test his right. But if he has the courage, let the issue be fairly made. He proposes, it is said, if Mr. Stanton will not resign, to remove him, and depend for his justification upon the clause of the law that retains a Secretary of War in office for the term of the President by whom he is appointed, unless sooner removed, with the consent of the Senate, and calling attention to the fact that Mr. Stanton was appointed by Mr. Lincoln.

We see here that the President proposes to rest his case upon a quibble, and has probably had advice on the subject from that illustrious quibbler, Mr. Stanbery. Doubtless Mr. Stanbery could argue all around the law, and could even prove it "unconstitutional," if called upon; but people have taken the law in its plain meaning, and they cannot see how Mr. Lincoln could form Mr. Johnson's Cabinet. If it suited Mr. Johnson to accept the Cabinet left by Mr. Lincoln, such acceptance was a practical reappointment, and cannot be otherwise regarded.

Can the President Remove a Cabinet Officer?

The action of the President in relation to Mr. Stanton raises this question, and as the law on the subject is deemed ambiguous, it is reasonable to inquire into its true interpretation. Before rectifying the provision relating to Cabinet officers, it will conduce to clearness to give its history.

The Tenure of Office bill, which prohibits the removal of officers by the President with-

out the consent of the Senate, originated in the Senate. As it passed that body Cabinet officers were excepted from its operation. When it was sent down to the House, an amendment was offered striking out the exception.

This was voted down by what would have been a tie vote, if Mr. Alley had not changed his vote from aye to nay and saved Speaker Colfax the embarrassment of a casting vote. The next day this vote was reconsidered and the amendment adopted by 82 ayes against 62 nays. When the bill, as amended, was returned to the Senate for its concurrence, that body, after debate, rejected the House amendment by 28 nays against 17 yeas. It then went back to the House, which adhered to its amendment, and passed it to a committee of conference. The result of the conference was the following proviso, which now stands as a part of the law:—

Provided, That the Secretary of State, of the Treasury, of War, of the Navy, of the Interior, and the Postmaster-General, and the Attorney-General shall hold their offices respectively during the term of the President by whom they have been appointed, and one month thereafter, subject to removal by and with the advice and consent of the Senate.

President Johnson is understood to hold that this does not apply to the members of his Cabinet who were appointed by his predecessor. It will not be difficult to demonstrate that this is the correct interpretation. It is evident from the circumstances that the members of the Cabinet were intended to be put upon a different footing from other officers in respect to their removability. Had it been the design of the law to subject them all to the same rule, it would have sufficed to strike out the exception in the original bill, as the House proposed, and the Senate by a strong majority, after a full discussion, refused to do it. It was argued in the Senate that, if the exception were simply struck out, the consequence would be that a new President would be compelled to retain the Cabinet of his predecessor, whenever the Senate happened to disagree with him in policy; whereas fairness requires that every new President shall be permitted to select his confidential advisers. The proviso agreed upon in the Conference Committee was intended to meet this objection, and must be interpreted with reference to it. The proviso was a compromise. The House yielded to the views of the Senate as far as to allow every President to select his own Cabinet; and the Senate yielded to the views of the House so far as to make Cabinet officers, once appointed by a President, irremovable till one month after the close of his term, without the consent of the Senate.

But a question may arise (and here, it seems to us, the controversy hinges) whether the mere continuance in office of a predecessor's Cabinet operates as an appointment, and renders the officers irremovable. If it does, Mr. Johnson can remove no member of his Cabinet; if it does not, he is prohibited from removing only those whom he himself appointed. Now the law enables us to decide this question with absolute certainty and precision. It sweeps away all possibility of a President inheriting the Cabinet of his predecessor without a fresh appointment by himself and a new confirmation by the Senate. It makes the term of every Cabinet officer expire by law on the 4th of April after the President goes out on the 4th of March. They can no more serve another day without a fresh appointment than the President can serve beyond the 4th of March without a re-election. The law does not contemplate any such thing as the continuance of a predecessor's Cabinet by acquiescence. The law cannot, of course, be retroactive, and therefore Mr. Lincoln's appointees continue until Mr. Johnson removes them. But when he has made an appointment himself, the officer is irremovable without the consent of the Senate until one month after the expiration of his term of office.

If Mr. Stanton should refuse to resign, and should dispute the President's right to remove him, what would be the remedy? We suppose the President would apply to a United States Judge for a mandamus commanding Mr. Stanton, by the authority of the Court, to surrender the office and its archives. If he should refuse to obey the mandamus, the President would support the authority of the Court and oust him by force.

We commend the prudence and good judgment of the President in making an example of Stanton before meddling with Sheridan. As we remarked on a former occasion, it would be absurd to show extreme resentment at insubordination in distant Louisiana and Texas, while tamely putting up with insolent contumacy in his own Cabinet under his very nose. On grounds of policy, as well as dignity, it is better to make an example of Stanton rather than of Sheridan. The radicals would probably take up Sheridan and run him for President. He courts removal as the greatest stroke of luck that could befall him. It would be no punishment to aid him in his aspirations for the Presidency. But Stanton clings to office as a coward clings to life. He dies without any hope of resurrection. The Republicans must at well think of digging up a rotten carcass and running it for the Presidency, as of running Stanton to compensate him for his loss of office.

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TO THE LADIES: LINED CARRIAGES, PRINTED FOR DRESSES, WHITE FOR BODIES. These goods are essential for SUMMER WEAR, and we are now selling the balance of our importation at a GREAT SACRIFICE. E. M. NEEDLES & CO., N.W. Corner Eleventh and Chestnut. CHEAP DRY GOODS, CARPETS, MATTINGS, OIL CLOTHS, AND WINDOW SHADES.—Great Bargains from Auction.—V. E. ARCHAMBAULT, N. E. CORNER OF ELEVENTH AND MARKET STREETS, will open this morning 100 yards extra quality double Imperial White Canton Matting, slightly stained, will be sold at 25c, worth 35c; Red Check Matting, 27 and 30c; Ingrain Carpets, all wool, at 62, 75, 80, 81, 82, 83, 84, 85, 86, 87, 88, 89, 90, 91, 92, 93, 94, 95, 96, 97, 98, 99, 100; English Tapestry Brussels Carpets, \$1.25 and \$1.75; Hemp Carpets, \$1 to \$2; Oil Cloth, 60c; Entry and Stair Carpets, 50 to 60c; Window Shades, \$1 each; Plain Shirting, 7 and 8c; Table Linens, 60c to \$1.25; Towels, 12 to 25c; Flannel for Bedding, 60c; 100 yds. extra quality double Calicoes, 10 to 15c; Lawns, 25c; Wholesale and Retail Store, N. E. CORNER ELEVENTH AND MARKET STREETS. J. CHAMBERS, No. 810 ARCH STREET. Novelties Opening Daily. —Real Gully Lace. —Black Gully Lace. —Pointe d'Alencon Lace. —Pointe de Gize Lace. Thread Veils from \$2.00. WHITE GOODS. —Marseilles Dry Dress—Bargains. —French Muslins, 2 yards wide, at 60 cents. Shirred and Trunk Lace Muslins, India Twilled Long Cloth, Plain Shirting, and Plain Muslins, all kinds, 1/2 yard wide; Cambric Edgings and Ribbons, new designs every season. 7 1/2 M. UNITED STATES REVENUE STAMPS.—Principal Depot, No. 304 CHESTNUT STREET. Central Depot, No. 103 & FIFTH STREET, one door below Chestnut. ESTABLISHED 1864. Revenue Stamps of every description constantly on hand in any amount. Orders by Mail or Express promptly attended to. United States Notes Drafts on Philadelphia or New York, or current funds received in payment. Particular attention paid to small orders. The decisions of the Comptroller can be consulted, and any information regarding the law cheerfully given.