SPIRIT OF THE PRESS.

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

Herschel V. Johnson on Reconstruction.

From the N. Y. Tribune.

The Hon. Herschel V. Johnson, of Georgia, who was the Douglas candidate for Vice-President in 1860, and a Unionist thereafter until he became a secessionist, recently sent us a rather long exposé of the political situation, as viewed from an ex-Confederate standpoint. We printed his manifesto *verbatim*, with comments much shorter than itself. He comes back upon us in a letter which fills four full columns in close type, and would much more than cover this page in our editorial type. We would like to answer it, but Mr. Johnson allows us no room. "Some take all, but he leaves none." We are compelled, therefore, to rest content with restating a few important facts which he ignores or defies.

I. Mr. Johnson asserts that Congress delayed for two long years to mature and present any plan of reconstruction. He is mistaken. Congress presented a plan near the close of its very first session after Lee's and Johnson's surrender; and the next Republican State Convention of this State publicly pledged our support to the admission of each and every State which should accept it. None of them except Tennessee *did* accept it, or has yet done so; so another plan had to be devised and proposed. Was that the fault of Congress? Suppose the present plan is in like manner rejected; must the Republicans bear the blame?

II. Mr. Johnson asserts that the class for which he speaks are ready to treat the blacks justly, and even kindly. We will admit that he thinks so. But he thought they did the same when they held those blacks in slavery; and refused to take the oath of a Christian Bishop, if black, against the most worthless reprobate, if white. They say hell is paved with good intentions. But Governor Pease says at least one hundred negroes have been feloniously killed by whites in Texas alone under the sway of the Johnsonian State authorities, and *not one* of these white murderers has been punished by the Throckmorton rule. We have for years been printing corresponding accounts from all the unrepresented States. Herschel V. Johnson will not deny that *some* negroes have been killed by whites in the South since April, 1865. How many of the murderers have been brought to justice by the State authorities? This is a matter of simple fact. And we assert that not one white man in every twenty who have killed negroes in the South since Lee's surrender has been brought to justice by those to whom Mr. Johnson thinks it very hard that those States and their blacks should not be surrendered by Congress.

III. Mr. Johnson says there are eight millions of whites and but four millions of blacks in the South. Both figures are about right. Of the whites, there may be one hundred thousand—not more—disfranchised by Congress as prominent Rebels. Say that these represent half a million of people—call it a million, if you will—leaving but seven millions of enfranchised whites to four millions of blacks. The whites own nearly all the land and other property; more than half of them are educated, while the adult blacks are generally ignorant; the whites are certainly not inferior in intellect, while far superior in social position. Now, says Mr. Johnson, to intrust political power to these seven millions of enfranchised whites and four millions of blacks is to hand the South over to negro domination, subjugate the white race, endanger property, order, everything! Surely, a man who knows whether four is or is not more than seven—much more one who has run for Vice-President—ought to know better than to put forth such glaring absurdity as this. The immigration to the South is heavy, and almost exclusively white; there are no negro lawyers, negro doctors, and few negro merchants; almost every element of power is in the hands of the whites. To affect to fear black domination under such circumstances is either hypocritical or pusillanimous—we mean, it looks like that. We shall next hear that the dogs of the South have held a meeting and resolved to ask protection against the bloody sheep, who threaten to eat them up. Yet Mr. Johnson's letter rings the changes on this monstrous assumption.

IV. Mr. Johnson urges that the blacks are generally ignorant. That, we presume, is so. But blacks did not make the laws which punished as felony the teaching of one of their number to read; and, since they have been allowed to learn, they have evinced general aptitude and eagerness to do so. Let us encourage and help them to grow in knowledge and wisdom; bearing, meantime, with their constantly decreasing ignorance.

V. We most emphatically deny that there is any quarrel between the "two sections," or their people. There is a faction at the South which still mourns "the Lost Cause," and refuses to be comforted. It has a very large body of sympathizers at the North. There is not in all regions over which Mr. Jefferson Davis once presided a single county wherein so large a portion of the inhabitants are in political accord with Mr. H. V. Johnson and his teachings as in this very city of New York. Do let us discard misleading phrases, and talk to the point. There is but one living political question:—"Shall the blacks, or shall they not, be henceforth regarded as human beings, with rights and feelings which whites are bound to respect?" Whoever answers, "Yes, they shall," belongs to our party, whether he live in Boston or Shreveport; whoever answers, "No," belongs to the other party. *We* long since said:—"Let *all* vote!" The Republicans will be ready to say it quite as soon as the Democrats, North or South, will. Let us scorn all disguises and talk right to the point. Mr. Johnson might have spared his words, if he had not needed them to conceal his ideas.

VI. As to the right and wrong of secession and coercion—what we said in 1860—what Congress resolved in 1861—what were Mr. Calhoun's theories of government—and whether Mr. Johnson, being a Unionist, was justified in fighting to subvert the Union because others did—whether the States in revolt were in or out of the Union, etc. etc.—we cannot make room to discuss them with Mr. Johnson. "Let the dead bury their dead." If any one chooses to see what we have to say on these and kindred themes, he will find it compressed into a very few chapters of "The American Conflict." That we do not see these matters through Mr. Johnson's spectacles is very true; but can further controversy help the matter? We do surely hold that the Southern—even if you count out the blacks—*did not* secede from the Union, though a violent, brow-beating, aristocratic faction assumed to do so; we hold that this faction, without right or reason, made war on the Union, and got handsomely thrashed by it, as was deserved; and we hold that the result is most auspicious to the permanent well-being of both North and South. Mr. Johnson, we regret to see, still gropes in the thick darkness of the past—though the day in its fullness has come—and insists on keeping his eyelids as tightly closed as possible. If what he fancies he sees were really so, slavery is not yet abolished, and every negro should be reclaimed and set to work by his old master, to said negro's infinite comfort and blessing. But the universe still rolls onward, and we can afford to leave Mr. Johnson's obstinate misconceptions to be corrected by the resistless march of events. "The stars in their courses" still shine, and light comes to each of us, quite independent of his will.

President Johnson in the Present Crisis.

From the N. Y. Herald.

A golden opportunity is now before President Johnson to make himself the undisputed master of the political situation and his administration a positive power in the land. If he has any pluck, any sagacity, any clearness of vision in perceiving the advantages of his present position, he will readily understand what is required of him to reach these advantages and to turn them to good account. The great central States, through the voices of Pennsylvania and Ohio, have spoken on this radical ultimatum of universal negro suffrage and negro supremacy, and it has thus become manifest to all eyes that we are on the verge of one of the greatest of revolutions in the annals of our political parties. Mr. Johnson may now do much to give cohesion and direction to this new uprising of public opinion, and a complete reconstruction of his Cabinet is the first essential to meet the demands of this crisis.

In beginning a new administration with an old Cabinet, Mr. Johnson undertook a very difficult task; but in attempting, from time to time, to adapt this old Cabinet to a new order of things, by patching a patch here and a patch there, it was "love's labor lost"—an experiment not only profitless, but so fruitful of disasters that he may be thankful it has not cost him his official head. But if, in an official sense, he has escaped the last misfortune of Charles the First or Louis the Sixteenth, it is because his mistakes have served the purposes of his adversaries, and they have profited by them. Now, with their own heavy budget of blunders, condemned by the popular voice of the Northern States as far as they have expressed themselves, Mr. Johnson may turn the tables upon the baffled and astounded radicals, and identify his name, his policy, and his administration with the great majority of the loyal masses of the loyal North.

To this end he needs a new Cabinet, beginning with the State Department. Retirement would not now be an act of cruelty to Mr. Seward, but an act of kindness. He has outlived his day of usefulness in public life. He belongs to an age and generation, to a political system of dogmas and ideas, that have passed away. The best that his faithful, good man Friday can now do for him is to glorify him at the expense of Mrs. Lincoln, and in mean and scandalous tattle about her little bills as lady of the White House. To get rid, therefore, of the master, in order to be relieved of his man, would be of itself a good move on the part of the President; but much higher and larger considerations call imperiously for a new Secretary of State.

The same broad and general reasons, to a greater or less extent, apply to all the other members of the existing Cabinet, including old Mr. Welles and his ring of spoilsmen under the care of Mr. Fox. We understand that Mr. Johnson has been meditating for some time past upon such a stroke of policy; and it has been intimated to us from well-informed sources at Washington that he will, in all probability, under the encouragement of these late elections, proceed, without further delay, to active measures. Let him do so; but let him, in the reconstruction of his Cabinet against the implacable radicals, be careful to avoid the other extreme of incurable Copperheads. He wants no such official advisers about him as either of the two Seymours, or the two Woods, or Mayor Hoffman, Voorhees or Vallandigham. Such dead weights would soon sink Mr. Johnson beyond the reach of a resurrection. He wants men thoroughly identified with the Union cause in the war—men of whom the loyal masses of the North are justly proud, and yet men who are not committed to the revolutionary schemes of radical fanaticism—not visionary, but clear-headed men—such men, if you please, as Grant, Thomas, Sheridan, Hancock, Farragut, and Porter.

In the intermediate course thus suggested, Mr. Johnson may now do a great work in fusing the conservative Union men of both parties into the victorious party of 1868, leaving Northern radicals, fanatics, and Copperheads, and all the disturbing factions of the day, North and South, high and dry, like the driftwood left on both sides of a great river from a heavy flood. We may say, too, that if the revolutionary programme of the last two sessions of Congress stands condemned by the people, the constitutional amendment upon which the elections of last year were contested stands emphatically endorsed. A Cabinet, therefore, and a message to Congress, framed upon this issue, and especially upon the suffrage settlement embraced in said amendment, would make at once a diversion in both Houses of Congress as fatal to the radicals as it would be advantageous to the Administration in securing the legislative balance of power. Mr. Johnson will do well to understand that the people have not been following him, or fighting his battles in these late elections, but that they have been pronouncing judgment against the vicious negro schemes of radical fanaticism, as they pronounced a year ago in favor of the fair and acceptable scheme of Congress which the radical leaders in their inflated folly and self-conceit abandoned.

The Elections and the President.

From the N. Y. Times.

The *Express* has the following as a special despatch from Washington:—

"WASHINGTON, Oct. 9.—A conference of leading Democratic politicians has been requested by the President, with the view (as is supposed and believed) to the formation of a new Cabinet. Mayor Hoffman and Governor Seymour, of your State, are expected to take a part in the conference, having been written to for that purpose. The result of the elections yesterday has satisfied the Executive that his hour for action upon the subject of a new Cabinet has arrived."

It is not easy to see what the result of the elections has to do either with the President or his Cabinet. That result has not been brought about by anything done by either—nor is it a protest against anything which either has done.

If the Democratic party chooses now to take the responsibility of the Administration, it may be well enough for the President to give them the Cabinet. But with the Civil Office bill, and the Senate composed as it is and must be for some years to come, it is not easy to see how they have much to gain thereby.

Other despatches indicate a much more moderate and sensible estimate by the President of the real meaning of the late elections. Instead of seeing in them any popular demand for the elevation of the Democratic party to power, he is said to regard them as showing only an "evident reaction against extreme radicalism in Pennsylvania, where it has been the most rampant and violent, and openly threatened revolution;" and to have expressed the hope that they "will have the effect to check the ultra policy hitherto forced upon Congress by the crack of the radical whip."

This is reasonable and just. The despatch to the *Express* probably indicates the wishes, rather than the knowledge, of that journal and of those for whom it speaks.

The Extraordinary Counter-Revolution.

From the N. Y. Herald.

We are hurrying onward to our political Niagara; Copperheads, radicals, and all the fanatical elements are sweeping down the rapids. Up to the time that Congress passed the Constitutional amendment, and including that action, the people were satisfied. But when Congress, mistaking the will of the nation, loses its balance upon its giddy summit of power, then it is proper that the people should again rise and assert their will. The people, watching with intense interest the restoration of their social and progressive welfare, see no hope unless they draw the curb upon the power they have invested with authority. The situation is easy of analysis; for, with all the finely woven radical theories of black and white equality, we want to see those practical results which demonstrate that our legislative action has been productive of good. Search where we may, we can find no evidences of good results; the attempt to reconstruct the South has gone on from bad to worse, until the ten unrestored States drag like a dead weight upon the progress of the nation. Here, in the great republic of the nineteenth century, we go back for precedents in government, and find that the Roman system is the only one to which we can adapt ourselves. Thus it is an open acknowledgment that our territorial extension imposes upon us the necessity of a great central force, governing, through a pro-consular organization, all the States that can in any way make a healthy opposition to its power. This principle once well rooted, it takes no prophetic brain to predict the succeeding phases which attended the same system in Rome.

Our people are too sensible to let the power slip out of their hands so quickly. The elections in California and Maine denoted the fact that the people were beginning to reason over the mad acts of a Congress as well as of an Executive that could not understand their desires. The two States named were only the preface to the telling rebuke which we are now giving to our unworthy rulers. Pennsylvania and Ohio, potent in the lists, wheel into line, and add their voices to the general outcry against misgovernment. New York, soon to come to the trial by vote, will doubtless follow the example set by the former States. The whole country, in fact, is tired of this crushing process of reconstruction, which weighs with equally destructive power upon both North and South. The Warren Hastings rule of India may have suited that country; the Roman provincial system may have been adapted to the ignorance of two thousand years ago; but those were cases where force placed pressure on ignorance. Intelligence cannot and will not bear such rule. There have not been men wanting in the radical party to recognize that their power was but short-lived unless they could throw some great ignorant element into the existing intelligence of the country. This element, the negro, they have seized upon and have, by superhuman exertions, floated him to the surface. Less buoyant than the elements around him, he can only be held up until his own specific gravity overcomes our power to sustain him.

That failing, he must sink to the level to which his talent fits him, and from which, little by little gaining light, he may rise by his own intrinsic value. To cling to the negro we must sink to his level; by doing which we shall not elevate him but debase ourselves. It has taken some time for the people to appreciate these facts, but that they now are fully alive to them is undoubted. They see that they have been deceived by the political demagogues who have held the negro up as the main element in our revolution when he was only a minor issue. The revulsion of feeling, we regret to say, will, for the moment, be unfortunate for the black man; but this is the fault of his fanatical friends, who have forced him upward to a point where he cannot balance himself.

The action of the radical party has not been the creation of a civilization for the negro, but an attempt to turn the white race back to a barbarism which we have been trying to shake off, and from which we have been emerging for more than twenty centuries. It must be understood that our people are awakened at last, and are little inclined to march in retreat. The elections of Ohio and Pennsylvania fully demonstrate it. Let it not be supposed, however, that these elections denote a victory for the old Democratic party, whose principles, as shown by the Rebellion, were "rule or ruin." It shows, on the contrary, that the Republican element of the country, tired and disgusted with the radical programme, have, for the moment, stepped aside to give rebuke to their leaders, and show them that the intelligence of the United States is not willing to accept a rule that cannot stand the analysis of common sense. There is a mighty conservative power quietly holding itself in reserve and watching our political fortunes. It is awaiting the next Presidential election, and when the moment comes to strike it will deal a terrible blow; Democrat, radical, Copperhead, and fanatic will go down before it. A President totally unfitted to appreciate the demands made upon him will disappear, and a Congress that has made a party football of the nation will also be deposed to give place to the best men of the country—the true conservative element of real statesmanship.

Pennsylvania—Ohio—New York.

From the N. Y. World.

The news from Pennsylvania which we published Wednesday confirmed our expectations; that which we publish this morning from Ohio fills the measure of our hopes. The people of both these States have cast the majority of their votes for the candidates of the Democracy. So say our latest despatches from Ohio, and they cannot be far wrong. At the worst our victory is all but overwhelming. Beyond all question, too, will the people of the Empire State in November roll up a majority, doubling, yes, trebling, their joint majorities. Six millions of people have spoken. To these the four millions of New York will join their voice, and this is their response to Maine and California—

"So Jura answers from her lofty peaks
Back to the joyous Alps, who call on her aloud."

New York, Pennsylvania, and Ohio; the first the Empire State, and the second and third of all the States of the Union; the three most wealthy, populous, and intelligent of all; the foremost three in all the arts and victories of peace and weightiest in war; the annual products of whose industry is double that of any other three and more various; whose garnered wealth surpasses that of any six of their sister States; whose commerce on our inland seas and upon all oceans surpasses the commerce of all—it is these three States which now are thundering, with the voice of their ten millions of people, an indignant, unanimous veto upon the proceedings and the policy of the party in power.

It is high time for a voice so potent to make itself heard. Our sons were led by thousands to fruitless slaughter—yet it was dumb. Heaping up, to mortgage the industry and abridge the joys of ourselves and our children and our children's children, rose a mountain of debt—yet it was dumb. Two years of peace, which failed to restore the Union, were added to the four years of war which failed, and like those years were spent by shameless partisans in plans to prolong their hold upon power they had usurped—power prostituted to the stirring up anew of strife which had ended; prostituted to the imposition of a military despotism upon ten sovereign States; prostituted to the crushing down of an already conquered people—our brethren, our kinsmen—and to the lifting up into sole supremacy there of an ignorant, degraded race; prostituted to the crippling of Northern industry by reckless taxes and monstrous "protective" tariffs, and to the throttling of Southern industry by the denial of order and law under which it might ere this have well revived; prostituted to the denial of any reconstruction laws for months, and then to the framing of such as would longest postpone their pretended purpose, and then to the heaping of obstructions, restrictions, and penalties upon these—yet still it was dumb.

Long suffering and patient, indeed, with their servants have the Northern people been. High time indeed was it that the puissant voices of these their masters should be heard, saying as Pennsylvania and Ohio have said, and New York will say:—"Let strife cease; let peace prevail; let law revive; let the Union live."

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