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AT THE EVENING TELEGRAPH BUILDING, NO. 108 SOUTH THIRD STREET.

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WEDNESDAY, OCTOBER 23, 1867.

Conservative Misstatements in Regard to Disfranchisement Under the Reconstruction Laws.

A conservative contemporary, in speaking of the late election in Alabama, at which, by an overwhelming majority, her people voted for a Convention, says that "very few white men voted, the most of them having been disfranchised by Congress."

Now that the elections are over, we had hoped that there would no longer be any occasion for indulging in such gross perversions of the truth as that contained in the portion of the above extract which we have italicized. Every intelligent man knows, or ought to know, that the Reconstruction acts, so far from disfranchising "the most" of the white citizens of the late Rebel States, really reach to only a very small class of those citizens. It has universally been conceded by all, except the most rampant Copperheads, that the leaders of the late Rebellion ought to be excluded from taking a part in the great work of reconstruction. Andrew Johnson never uttered a truer or more popular sentiment than when he said that traitors must be made to take a back seat in this business, and that the work of reconstruction must be confided to loyal hands. That he himself has proved treacherous to his own avowed principles does not render them the less true. The loyal sentiment of the country would have sustained Congress in going much farther in the work of disfranchising Rebels than it saw fit to go; but Congress was liberal and in a spirit of wise statesmanship sought to strengthen the basis of the new political communities of the South by enfranchisement, rather than by disfranchisement. It recognized the fact that the Rebel masses were, to a great extent, the tools and victims of their unscrupulous leaders, and it exercised towards those masses a generous clemency. It disfranchised none of the common people. It excluded only those who, from their position in society, could properly be called leaders; and even of them it disfranchised only those who, having in some official capacity taken a solemn oath to support and defend the Constitution of the United States, afterwards broke that oath by engaging in the Rebellion.

Now, just here let us pause a moment to inquire whether this exclusion be not just and wise. What loyal man will say that these Southern leaders, who for years and years had been plotting the Rebellion, and oaths, ought not to be excluded from the imnot to be made "to take a back seat," as Andrew Johnson said? If so, what is all this conservative clamor about?

But to return. The number of persons thus disfranchised is necessarily very small compared with the whole bulk of the community. It is the few, and not the many, who hold office. To say, therefore, that Congress has disfranchised "the most" of the white people of the South is absurdly false. It has done no such thing. The vast majority of the people are as free to go to the polls and vote as they ever were. A Richmond letter-writer in the New York Herald, who does not conceal his hostility to the Reconstruction acts, estimates that in the whole State of Virginia not more than five thousand persons are disfranchised by the law, and his estimate accords with that made by Governor Pierpont and other responsible Southern authorities. The registration returns themselves show that the masses of the white people are not disfranchised. If it be objected that the number of white voters registered is not as large as might have been anticipated from the population, the sufficient answer is that such a result is due to the fact that many of the Rebels have doggedly refused to be registered. They had the opportunity to be enrolled, but they rejused to embrace it. If they are not voters, therefore, it is their own fault, and they are not entitled to a particle of sympathy. The man who will not take the trouble to conform to the requirements of the law, and become duly registered as a voter, does not deserve to vote. The fact that this refusal to register was in accordance with the advice of Northern Rebel sympathizers shows the hollowness of this cry of disfranchisement. Suppose that the Democratic leaders in New York should urge their party followers not to register themselves for the coming election, could they then turn round after the time for registration had passed, and charge that they had been "disfranchised?" Manifestly not. Neither can those Rebel malcontents at the South who have stubbornly refused to be registered, now complain if they are not allowed to vote.

The truth is, it is not Rebel disfranchisement but loyal enfranchisement that troubles these conservative croakers. They behold in that great measure of practical statesmanship the downfall of the partisan oligarchy which has hitherto ruled and ruined the South. They see ir it the loss of party power. These are the mutterings and groaus of expiring aristocracy that we hear. It dies hard, but its hour has come. Republican democracy, based upon equal rights, is the rising power in the South. Slavery and aristocracy have had their day. It is now the people's turn to

Has a Naval Officer a Right to a Politi-cal Opinion? A curious instance of the exercise of red tape and tyranny has been furnished by the recent action of the Navy Departmennt in regard to the court-martial of Engineer George F. Sawyer. That officer was charged "with using language disrespectful to the President of the United States," was tried at Portsmouth, and sentenced to be "suspended for one year, lose three-fourths of his salary, and be publicly reprimanded by the Secretary." The finding of the Court is confirmed, and we have a delectable homily from the granddame of the Navy Department on the subject of the duty of officers in the service. The facts of the case, as developed by the trial, alter semewhat the inference conveyed by Mr. Wells, and remove much of the culpability of Mr. Sawyer. It appears that a number of officers engaged in a political discussion, and that Mr. Sawyer, in reply to a charge that Congress was "unjust," "tyrannical," and a "usurping body," declared his belief that "Congress would fail of its duty unless it impeached the President." These words were spoken in the heat of discussion, and were in reply to equally offensive remarks by another officer. Immediately some tale-bearer and time-server, one of those who are ever ready to "crook the pregnant hinges of the knee, that thrift may follow fawning," reports these remarks to the Secretary, who has Mr. Sawyer court-martialled and suspended. But was anything done to those who denounced Congress? Were the men who declared a coordinate branch of the Government to be a "usurping body" held to answer? Not at all. He who merely exercised a citizen's right to an opinion was disgraced, while others equally guilty were allowed to go unrebuked. Such a decision may be good on technical grounds, but it shocks the common sense of the country to see what is a palpable injustice go forth with all the sanctimonious prating of that thoroughly incompetent Cabinet officer. We are not surprised that Mr. Welles would like to have all expressions of public opinion crushed out. He would, doubtless, if he could, compel us to do reverence to the Administration, and from the very wording of his order we see how hardly he tolerates criticism. He says, with ill-concealed regret, that he cannot interfere with all alike, that "whatever latitude of denunciation or abuse civilians may choose to indulge in with regard to the authorities of the Government, officers of the Navy can claim no such privilege, even under the plea that they have a right to express their

But the mere fact whether or not the punishment in this particular case was just, sinks into insignificance when compared with the question as to whether or not an officer in the service of the United States has a right to entertain political opinions. It resolves itself into the question whether the citizen is who finally, in precipitating it, were obliged | merged into the soldier or sailor, and the fact to do so over their own broken and discarded | that he is serving his country deprives him of all right to an opinion as to what is most conportant work of reconstruction? Ought they | ducive to her good. We do not think it does. If an officer was to go so far as to utter disloyal sentiments, or even sentiments grossly insulting to the Commander-in-Chief of the forces of the United States, we agree with Mr. Welles that he is "not only wanting in the qualities of a gentleman, but is wholly unfit for the military service." But the present case does not fall under any such denomination. The House of Representatives had referred to a committee the question of impeachment. The subject hal been broached and discussed in the Hall of the people's delegates. It was before the country, and it was not a disrespect to the President such as would warrant a trial and conviction. It was merely the expression of opinion on a subject suitable for such an expression, and on which every citizen had a right to think as he pleased. A soldier was a citizen before he was a soldier, and in becoming the latter he did not cease to be the former. Every officer, in any department of the Government, has clearly a right to think and speak on political topics with freedom, so that he does not insult his superior officer. And that the other parties to the discussion, those who denounced Congress, were not reprimanded, is a proof that Mr. Welles was seeking to curry favor with Mr. Johnson, even at the expense of justice. The Court which found the verdict were but tools of Mr. Welles. As the New York Times well characterizes the whole proceeding, it was "a remarkable piece of official toadyism;" and with justice adds that, "if the Secretary undertakes to courtmartial all officers who 'speak disrespectfully of the President' in these times, he will have his hands full."

opinions on political subjects." Not being

able, however, to deal so with "civilians," he

vents his spleen against those who are within

his reach, and suspends Mr. Sawyer.

The whole proceeding seems to us so uncalled for and so ridiculous as to be only excelled by the Turveydrop-like advice of "old grandmother" Welles, when he adds, with a fluency acquired by quoting from "Habits of Good Society," that "a naval officer should be a gentleman in language and deportment. Good sense and good breeding will always enable any individual to express his opinions without giving just cause of offense, and an officer who cannot do so is as much deficient in those qualities as he is in a sense of military duty when he treats his superior with disrespect."

Mr. Johnson instructing the officers of the Navy, through his Secretary, in "language and deportment," is too good a scene to pass by unnoticed. Would it not be well for Mr. Welles to edit a work on the "language" proper to a gentleman, as furnished by his superior, and have chapters devoted to such caption as "dead duck," "a body hanging on the verge of the Government," and the like? And if deportment is not sufficiently considered by

Turveydrop, then let the inaugural address of Mr. Johnson and his "deportment" on that occasion and the 22d of February be minutely described. If no photographs of the Presidential attitudes on those occasions were taken, the cartes de visite of Burton or Clarke as "Toodles" would do just as well. But, by all means, let us have the red-tape work on "deportment of gentlemen."

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#### HE LATEST NEWS FROM SOUTH AMERICA

EVENING TELEGRAPH SPECIAL CORRESPONDENCE. VALPARAISO, Sept. 19, 1867.—The national lestivities which commence to-day have monopolized the general attention of the public. News from the mining district state that the gold fever is at its height, and that more tuan one hundred and fifty mines are in full opera-tion. A vein was discovered lately near Cachi-guys which bids fair to eclipse all those found up

to the present time
A rumor prevails here and in Santiago about the probable return of the Spaniards. Mer-chants of this city are said to have received the news, but the official paper does not mention anything about it. The idea is ridiculed by many and in case of the arrival of a Spanish flee!, we are now well prepared for saluting them

with one hundred gurs.

A steam line is to be established for England, which will make monthly trips, and the boats are expected to accomplish the passage in thirty

PANAMA, Oct. 13, 1867.-The Costa Rican Government is working energetically toward the con-struction of a railroad from the Pacific to the Atiantic, and the necessary surveys have already

I ma, Sept. 26, 1867—A letter dated at Islay, Sept. 23, says:—"The people are trying to take torcible possession of two boxes of needle gons which are at the Custom House. Great exchement prevails; pamphlets are in c reula-tion proclaiming Canseto to have taken possession of the supreme power. It is likely that be-fore an hour from now Islay will have seconded

the movement of Arequips."

The mind of the public in the latter place is not yet pacified, and further disturbances are apprehended.
The General Agent of the English Steamship

Company is about to make a contract with the Government of Chill for establishing a steam line through Magelian Strait,

A battalion of infantry has taken sides with the people. The rebels don't recognize the actions of the Dictator, the Provincial or Con-stitutional Government. The Constitution of 1860 has been proclaimed, to which General Canseco is a strong atherent. As the steamer leaves, the captain of the port of Islay has been removed by order of Canseco.

It is, however, probable that the disturbances will be settled by the arrival of troops under the command of General Bustamante.

Buenos Avres, Sept. 13, 1867.—The National Congress is still depating the projected aboli-tion of the law for the imprisonment of debtors. The proposition for the construction of a northern branch tailroad from Sau Fernando to the canal was accepted. The Eastern Railroad is intended to be prolonged as far as Mendoza, and a plan to that effect has been presented to the Senate of the Province. The general im-pression, however, is that the enterprise is too gigapure to be carried out without the assistance of the Government. It is proposed that the latter should take a large proportion of the shares, and have the road constructed under its own direction.

Montevideo, Sept. 15, 1867.—For two weeks the hostile forces of the present Paraguayan war remain in slatu quo; the fortress of Humaitu is bombarded by the squadron, which has found its way up the river, and it is expected that the General in-chief meditates a siege of the fort with the assistance of his land forces; still it seems doubtful whether Humalil can ever be taken, for it has a naturally strong position, and will be able to hold out for a long

The rumor prevails that diplomatic negotia tions will be inaugurated, and indeed the Chan-culior of the British Legation at Buenos Ayres has left for Paraguay, which gave rise to the above remor; however, nothing certain known. Toe war will probably not last much longer, as either a compromise or a bold move on the part of either belligerent is expected to bring the matter to a crisis. General Flores much liked, and a great friend of progress. A contract has been made by the Government with an agent at Spanish capitalists for the laying of a submarine cable to Europe. The Oriental Republic progre-ses favorably, although a number of dema-gogues are constantly trying to usurp the supreme powers there. The rebellion which a number of the inhabitants of the western provinces had inaugurated has been successfully suppressed. Immigration from Europe, particularly from Italy, Spain, and France, is consi derably on the increase, and the shipping of the ort assumes larger proportions every month. The death of General Gabriel Velazco is reported. He has been for a number of years intimately connected with the fate of the re-

The Government has ordered that the City of Montevideo should be finished, the building having been started by the Spaniards, but never completed,

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ROBERT THOMPSON. ROBERT THOMPSON, 10 16 w/m5t

OFFICE OF THE LEHIGH COAL AND NAVIGATION COMPANY.

PHILADELPHIA, October 14, 1887.

At the request of numerous Brockholders of this on pany who failed to receive in time copies of the Circuiar of October 3, addressed to them, the subscription books to the new CONVERTIBLE LOAN will remain (pen until the 28th instant, 10 15 111 SOLOMON SHEPHERD, Treasurer,

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