

SPRIT OF THE PRESS.

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

Republican Aims.

There can be but little question now of the way in which the reconstruction process, as Congress has arranged it, will end. By hook or by crook the Southern States will come into the Union under it, and for the most part they will be brought in by Radical hands. The new constitutions will, of course, meet Congressional requirements, and then all will be done for the Southern negro that the Republican party at the North has proposed to do by direct legislation. We put aside the scheme of establishing each colored head of a family on a forty-acre farm as one which the party, as a party, has never seriously entertained, though some of its leaders may have talked of it. Whatever is to be done, if anything is to be done, towards the better distribution of landed property at the South, will have to be done by State legislation. We are getting further and further away every day from the possibility of Congress undertaking any such job. There will still remain the task of abolishing the odious discrimination against negroes at the North by which the legislation of several States is still disgraced.

We fear the opportunity of accomplishing this speedily has, as we pointed out last week, passed away for the present, but we are satisfied, nevertheless, that the abuse will not be of very long duration. It cannot last under the battery of a free press and a free platform. The arguments which the Ohio Republicans defend their opposition to it at the late election show that it cannot last very long, for they show that it rests simply on ignorance or prejudice. If it appeared that there was any principle of government to which the body of the people are deeply attached, violated by the admission of the negroes to the polls, we should look forward to a long and doubtful struggle. But when there is nothing better to be said against it than that it is a white man's government, we know that its triumph is not very far distant.

But supposing, then, "equal suffrage" established all over the country—the millennium would still be some time coming. There are abundant indications on all sides of us that many good people are not of this opinion. The fight against caste and privilege and inequality before the law has been so bitter, the prize on which the Republican party is at last setting its hands seems so splendid and has seemed so remote, that people have naturally enough worked themselves up into the belief that, once it is attained, the good will be done. The body politic is affected with some delusion. The ballot during the last two years has been constantly spoken of as if it were a kind of panacea, as if we had only to give it to persons of the male and female sex, not lunatics or criminals, in order to see the Golden Age return, to see the thorny path of progress, along which the race has thus far struggled with bleeding feet, suddenly converted into a path of flowers, in which "toil of heart and knees and hands" will be no longer necessary. Of course we do not mean to affirm that if any individual Republican were asked privately whether he thought impartial suffrage would bring back the Golden Age, he would not laugh the idea to scorn. But we do not hesitate to affirm that there has been widely diffused through the ranks of the party a vague notion that, the ballot once secured for all, we should find ourselves on "the shining table-lands," where questions of government would give us no more trouble, where every man would know his duty and do it, and the knaves and oppressors would fade into nothingness. We go further, and affirm that this notion, vague though it has been, has done much towards creating and fostering the reckless and carelessness in the management of the party, the indifference of good men to the corruption and jobbery and humbug which have brought on its recent reverses, and which render its success in this State still doubtful. If the conviction that the ballot is, after all, but a means to an end; that in the hands of ignorant men it is but a means of defense and of education; that, like any other power, it may be used for good as well as for evil; and that the cause of all bad government in all ages and all nations has been the ignorance of the mass of the people, had been general, we should not have witnessed the recklessness and carelessness, the waste of enthusiasm, of devotion, and of numbers during the last two years which have brought the party into its present difficulties.

It is, however, because we do not believe the mission of the Republican party to be simply the work of reconstruction, or the establishment of universal suffrage; because we do believe that even if the organization should under its present name disappear, when these ends have been accomplished, it will reappear with but very little change in its elements under another; that it is now, and must remain by whatever name it may be known, the party of progress—the party which will seek to govern men through their reason rather than through their prejudices, their appetites, or their selfishness; the party of order, of education, of peace, and of national honesty; the party through which good and patriotic men will have to bring their convictions to bear on public affairs—that we rejoice in its successes, and should mourn its recent reverses more if we did not feel that they will prove the means of purifying it and increasing its efficiency.

But it must get rid of the notion at once and for ever that universal suffrage is a cure-all, and that when it has secured this its work is over. Its work will never be over while there are such things as knavery or corruption in politics; while there is a single blot of legislation needed to advance the common weal, a single law on the statute-book which keeps people from being as happy or as prosperous as they might be if they were not there; if it is not the party of "equal suffrage," or of any other political pill or tonic; if it is the party of good government, of virtue, knowledge, and understanding.

The Democratic party will not be hereafter, in any good sense of the word, a "conservative" party, a party striving to keep things fixed either through caution or through a sentimental attachment to the past. Now that slavery is gone, there is no time-honored abuse left for the lovers of old things to rally round. There is no objection here, as there is in Europe, on the part of any class of the community to frequent legislative changes, no love of ancient ways as ancient; all parties are almost equally fond of change and equally ready to try experiments in government. The Democrats are not, therefore, the equivalents of the European Tories or "Junkers." The party which the party of progress will here always find opposed to it will be a party composed of the most ignorant and most

vicious elements in the community, led by men of power, and anxious to use the vice and ignorance and degradation of their followers in order to attain it, and clamoring for much government or little government, for interference or non-interference, for honesty or repudiation, for movement or for repose, as may seem most likely to gratify the passions or the prejudices of the rank and file. To call this party "Conservative" is to degrade a term which some of the purest and best men in the world have, amidst many errors and many delusions, embodied by their self-sacrifice, their enthusiasm, and their piety.

If this be a true view of the ends for which the Republican party exists, it must, in order to do its duty, discard at once the idea that it may or must use the same means that the Democratic party has been in the habit of using. As it rests on the moral and religious sentiment of the community, and as it is to itself, it must give up the idea of copying Democratic methods, Democratic discipline and organization. Its means must, in a word, be noble as well as its aims. It must abandon the Democratic plan of throwing dust in the people's eyes, of treating voters as if they were children, of trying to persuade people, like Macaulay's Brahmin, that a mangy dog is a fine sheep, fit to sacrifice to the gods; it must give up all forms of humbug; it must not, for instance, try to bamboozle poor Irishmen by affecting to believe the Fenians a belligerent power, and passing sham volutes of sympathy with "the Irish republic." It must not affect to believe that men can work eight hours and yet be entitled to as much wages as if they worked ten; it must not pretend to believe that every man voter is a perfect judge of measures and men; that it makes no difference what a candidate's character or antecedents may be, provided he is "sound" on the suffrage or the temperance or the Sunday question, or on any other question; it must not affect to consider a judge's character and learning to be considerations of less importance than his political opinions; it must not, for instance, solemnly pretend to believe such a person as Judge Underwood "an enlightened jurist," simply because he hates Rebels; it must give up pretending to consider the conclusions of human reason to be no obstacles to the gratification of anything on which enthusiasm or passion may have set its heart, and above all, it must make the character of public men the first, and their knowledge the second, qualification for office. Mr. Stevens is just now abusing it for its "want of courage." We presume he means by this its failure to take some more "advanced" and less defensible position; some position which would bid louder defiance to the teachings of experience and principles of human nature than any he has yet been able to urge into. We, too, think it is want of courage that has brought it to grief; but it is not the kind of courage he has in his mind; it is the courage to discard base arts and crooked ways and mean compliances; the courage to trust everything to humanity, the conscience, the good sense, and the love of truth and justice of the American people, and nothing whatever to "management" and chicanery and balderdash. Some of the sagacious who have had charge of it have only all along under the delusion that if they only shouted loud enough for "equal rights" it made no difference how many knaves got office, and how much humbug they embodied in speeches and resolutions; but they are gradually awakening from it. There are already strong indications that the men of influence are finding out what the matter is.

The New York Tribune—and we refer to it not because we wish to cast any special blame on it for recent reverses, but because it is the most influential journal of the party—is doing now what, had it been done a year or two years ago, would, we verily believe, have prevented these reverses—warning the "legislative jobbers" of the course, and advising voters not simply to "scratch" but to "bolt," not simply to strike bad names off the party ticket but to put good ones on it; in other words, to make the getting of good men into office the first of party aims; and this it evidently does in the belief, which is and always has been ours, that in no way can the Republican party secure so long a tenure of power, so thoroughly root itself in the confidence of the people, as by showing that it considers victory at the polls not a blessing but a curse if it has been won through processes which harden the popular heart, blunt the popular conscience, or provide knaves with the reward of their hypocrisy. We sincerely trust that now that they are shaking off the delusion that they must swallow nominations whole, the Republicans of this State and elsewhere will show that they have clearer views of what the functions and value of the party are than many of their leaders, and that they will, while saving their consciences, give it their hearty support.

The Presidential Question—The Coalition Against General Grant.
From the N. Y. Herald.
There seems to be a common understanding and a sort of coalition among radicals and Copperheads, Chase Republicans, and Seymour and Pendleton Democrats, to kill off General Grant as a Presidential candidate. Nor is there any mystery in this strange alliance. With the nomination of General Grant as the Republican candidate, the issue of the Presidential election is a foregone conclusion. Excepting, perhaps, Delaware, Maryland, and Kentucky, Grant would sweep the whole country, North, South, East, and West. The result would be the same with one opposition candidate or a dozen such candidates in the fight. There would not be the ghost of a chance for Seymour, Pendleton, or McClellan, running singly or all together. This is well understood by the Democratic leaders. Hence they are doing, and will do, all they can to put Grant on the shelf and put Chase into the foreground as the Republican candidate. With Chase in the field, and Grant set aside, the campaign will be fought, not upon the grand achievements and high claims of the man upon the gratitude of a grateful people, but upon the universal negro suffrage and Southern negro supremacy schemes, and against the financial policy and principles of Mr. Chase, the Democrats, with Chase's nomination, will make their fight in the nomination of Seymour or Pendleton, and the Republicans will have to meet them on these issues. The glories of the war will be thrown out of the canvass, and thus shorn of their locks of Samson, the Republicans will be reduced to the level of the opposition; for their strength will be only that of their principles.

This explains the anxiety of the Democratic leaders to get General Grant out of the way, Republican standard-bearer. They have learned, not only from the popularity of General Jackson, but from that of General Harrison and General Taylor, the power of military glory; and they also know, from the fate of Henry Clay, that the most distinguished statesman, of whom everything is known, may be

defeated by a second-rate obscure politician if put on a popular platform. The Chase faction, however, believe in the discipline of the Republican party, and that, with his negro political system in the South, and with his financial system, including his legion of national banks in the North and his bondholders, he has the machinery for holding the Republican elements together. And so the Chase Republicans are as anxious as the Seymour Democrats of New York, or the Pendleton Democrats of Ohio, to shelve General Grant.

The Chase managers and banks of the New York Republican camp are working like beavers to reverse, in our November election, the tremendous October verdict of Ohio against Chase and his universal panacea of universal and immediate negro suffrage. They hold that Mr. Chase is not responsible for their Ohio disaster, and that Mr. Pendleton's convenient proposition for paying off the national bondholders in greenbacks had much to do with the increase of the Democratic vote in Ohio. But the approaching election in New York will be the conclusive one way or the other, on this Chase platform of universal negro suffrage and Southern negro supremacy. The conservative Grant Republicans, therefore, can settle the question on Tuesday next in favor of their candidate, by simply letting the Chase men fight out the battle for themselves; for, while the loss of New York to the Republicans, after all their other losses this fall, will leave them no alternative but General Grant, it is altogether probable that if they save New York, the result will turn the scale in favor of Chase.

Give them New York, and then, as Mr. Chase and his engineers have possession of the Republican machinery, we apprehend that General Grant will be shelved; we guess that, satisfied with his present desirable position, he will consent to stand aside in favor of Chase; and if so, we may, between Chase and Seymour or Chase and Pendleton, prepare for one of the most exciting and contested, and uncertain Presidential campaigns since that of 1844 between Clay and Polk.

Repudiating Dodges.

From the N. Y. Tribune.

The Herald says:—"No sensible person proposes, we suppose, to issue two thousand millions of Government money and pay off the debt at once with that."

Yes, George H. Pendleton does propose just that. Henry Clay Dunn proposes it. Vallandigham proposes it. Every Western Copperhead of any account proposes it. And you are deceiving your readers when you assert that they do not.

The Herald continues:—"What is meant by paying in greenbacks is to keep as much of that currency as float as the country can reasonably bear, and by no means to contract the present amount till all or a large portion of the debt be liquidated. That is the proposition, and that, we think, is the question which will come to. And what injustice would be done by the issue of greenbacks? Nearly all of the bondholders would be paid more than they gave for the bonds."

—Here is the old game of scaling the debt, which Hamilton put his foot on in 1790. A man walks up to the Treasury and says, "Mr. Treasurer, here is the promise of the United States to pay \$1000 to bearer on demand; I want the money." "Well, here is \$405," responds the Treasurer. "It is all that the bond cost you." If that is the answer of a sounder, then there never was a sounder. To determine how much greenback currency "the country can reasonably bear," we should resume and thereafter maintain specie payment. Then, if the country wants \$400,000,000, or \$800,000,000, or \$1,200,000,000 of greenbacks, it will float that amount; all that are not needed in business will be sent in for redemption.

God's Dealings with Nations.

From the N. Y. Independent.

That penalty waits upon crime, and that punishment sooner or later overtakes the guilty, was no revelation of Moses or of Christ. The experience of mankind had taught them this truth long before the thunders of Sinai or the milder effulgence of the Mount of Olives. The heathen typified the truth and evoked divinities out of their imaginations, whom they invested with this office of chastisement. Horace, in his sweetest and saddest strains, tells how Terror and Vengeance embark in the beaked trireme with their victims, and how gloomy Carl mounts behind the swiftest horseman. But the ancients did not fully apply this philosophy to men collected into nations, nor understand that the same law of penalty governs the fate of empires as well as of individuals. And the moderns, with all the light of a purer religion, and all the experience of the elder world, have not more than half discerned this pregnant truth.

Nations have always deemed themselves wiser than Omnipotence, and mightier than Omnipotence, and have endeavored to build themselves on injustice and wrong. And, though they may have seemed to flourish for a season, the divine justice has always overtaken them at last. Passing by the ancient nations, though they are most signal examples of this order of Providence, let us glance at the modern world. Two centuries ago Spain was the terror of Europe, the leading power of the world; and now where is she? Abject, degraded, the pest of her own people and the scorn of all other nations. The Inquisition and her colonial policy account for it all—these were injustice and cruelty organized into institutions. Two hundred years ago what seemed more established forever than the Bourbons in France? A despotism, the most absolute and perfect that the world had ever seen, had been consolidating itself for two centuries and more, and it looked as if it must endure forever. But the breath of a handful of encyclopedists, and play-writers, and pamphleteers blew the mighty fabric down—the stream proceeding from the contempt of human rights on which it rested, and which still exists, under the name of medieval institutions were even less free than those of France, excepting that the wisdom of Eliot, and Vane, and Sydney discerned the true rule of liberty and justice, for the supremacy of which they labored and died? And in the exact proportions that rule was adhered to has England been great and prosperous. And it is for her deviations from it that she owes most of her wars and all her ills and distresses, from Jacobinism down to Peninsularism.

The Hildes Son of the Church has had to choose between fighting with Italy to uphold the temporal power, with Prussia watching to make her opportunity of his extremity, or forfeiting the superstitious support of the ignorant masses of France led by the priests. Excessive taxation and a grinding conscription alone can keep him on his throne, and it will take but a slight turn of affairs to make them the instruments of his fall. The condition of the Pope and of Victor Emmanuel himself might be easily shown to be but inevitable complications arising from the endeavor to set aside the laws of God in their dealings with their subjects and other nations.

We are ourselves no obscure example of the truth of this doctrine. We too, endeavored to build up our own prosperity and secure our own peace on the sacrifice of the rights and happiness of men as good as ourselves. We thought by consenting with tyrants to be permitted to enjoy a part of their plunder of the poor. And for a while we seemed to succeed. But at last He who said "Vengeance is mine" bared His arm and avenged His poor. We paid dearly in the blood of our first-born and in the spoiling of our goods for our refusing to let the people go. And we have reason to hope that our chastisement has had the effect, in some good measure, which the divine chastisements are designed to produce. We have, under the sternest compulsion of Providence, retraced our steps, and begun doing the justice to our fellows which we should have done ninety years ago. Had our fathers laid the chains of their captives on the corner-stone of their new edifice, instead of offering human sacrifices upon it, what a mighty and prosperous people we should have been! The chain of our brethren which we consented to hold is what has held us back and kept us down in the career of greatness and glory. And now our future is to be shaped and colored by the wisdom with which we make absolute justice the new head of the corner of our reconstructed temple of liberty. This is the struggle in which we are now engaged, and through which we must labor to the crowning victory. When we learn that it is in righteousness and justice only that a nation can be established, and so live as a nation, we shall enter on a great career of prosperity and true glory beyond the warmest dreams of imagination. It is this that consecrates politics, and makes it a religious duty to take part in them until our laws become one with the divine laws of liberty, justice, and righteousness.

Thaddeus Stevens on the Nature of Our Government—The Suffrage Question.

From the N. Y. Times.

An aged statesman in retirement sometimes wields even more influence than when actively engaged in the contents of public life. The weight and authority due to his ability and patriotic services are enhanced by the presumption which age affords, that his opinions are no longer affected by his passions, and that selfishness and ambition have ceased to be among the motives which control his judgment. When Jefferson at Monticello, and Madison at Montpelier, and John Adams at Quincy, were called on, after they had withdrawn from political life, to give their views as to the true interpretation of the Constitution, and the real rights, or the tariff, or the question of State rights, or the tariff, or the limitations of Executive power, their replies carried great authority to fair-minded men of all parties, because they themselves had been foremost among the founders of the Government and the authors of the Constitution by which its powers and purposes were defined.

Thaddeus Stevens, at Lancaster, is trying to follow in their footsteps. Though still involved in the sharpest political struggles of the day, his waning life, and falling health, incite him to new modes of making his influence felt on the current of events; and lest he may not be able to impress his opinions upon the nation from his seat in Congress at its coming session, he has sent them forth in the form of a letter to a German neighbor and professedly in reply to his request. We doubt whether it will make as profound an impression on the public mind as its author anticipates. It lacks nearly all the qualities which gave to kindred papers issued by the early statesmen to whom we have referred, their great authority. Incoherent in its style, loose and inconclusive in its argument, and unstayed by anything in the Constitution or history of the country, it has nothing to commend for it any overwhelming influence on public opinion to regard Mr. Stevens as a great authority in affairs of government, will scarcely find in this paper any object to augment their admiration. The very object it is intended to serve is not calculated to win for it the respect which so pretentious a document should command. The German admirer, who applies to Mr. Stevens for his "opinion of the present prospects of our country," does not ask whether we are coming back more or less slowly, but surely, to the sure foundations of our old freedom and prosperity—whether we are restoring the Constitution to its old supremacy and the Union to its old integrity, and are again rearing the structure of our Government on the principles and purposes of the fathers; or whether, what he wants to know is "whether we now are likely to approach any nearer to the true principles of liberty than our fathers did, under their old and constrained Constitution." Without regard just now to the opinion of Mr. Stevens on this point, we do not think we are! We shall consider the country very fortunate if it ever again approaches so near to the "true principles of liberty" as did those who achieved our national independence and gave us the wisest, best, and most perfect constitution of government the world has ever seen!

Mr. Stevens has no hesitation in giving his correspondent and the country to understand, that he thinks we can do much better than our fathers did. He thinks we can now establish a government which will embody and protect the true principles of liberty "much more perfectly than did that one which existed, and which still exists, under the Constitution of 1789. And the one thing to be done for the attainment of that end—the one act by which this more perfect form of liberty can be secured—is held by Mr. Stevens to be, the assertion and exercise by Congress of absolute and complete authority over the whole question of suffrage in all the States—so that no State shall have, hereafter, any right or power to say who shall, and who shall not, vote for any officer, legislative or executive, in the State or nation. That great, fundamental right of all government and of all authority—is to be denied to the States, and to be absorbed—held absolutely and exclusively—by the central authority of the nation. And then and thus we shall "approach much nearer to the true principles of liberty" than we ever could do under the "old and constrained Constitution" of our fathers!

Mr. Stevens does not pretend that the old Constitution ever permitted any such concentration of political power. He cannot deny, and in effect he admits, that it prohibited its exercise by the Federal authority. But he maintains that the true basis of the Republic intended to establish just such a government

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as he describes—that this was their ideal of government as well as his—and that while they could not carry it out, we can and must. And to sustain this most extraordinary and preposterous pretense, Mr. Stevens pretends to appeal to the Declaration of Independence. We copy from his letter the following passage in which his argument, if argument it can be called, is set forth:—"The constitution of 1789 did not carry out the principles of government which were intended by the fathers, when in 1776 they laid the foundation of the Government on which this nation was to be built. Then they had been inspired with such a light from on high as never man was inspired with before, in the great work of providing freedom for the human race, through a Government in which no oppression could find a resting place. They contemplated the erection of a vast empire over this whole continent, which in its national character should be governed by laws of a supreme, unvarying character. While municipal institutions might be granted with self-control, for convenience, it was never intended that one-half of this nation should be governed by one set of laws, and the other half by another and conflicting set, on the same subject. The law, the principle, which was to apply to those on the Savannah and Susquehanna, else the declaration would have proclaimed the one—the people on the Potomac and the Chesapeake, and the other half of the continent, and those on the Savannah with a modified equality; that the one had inalienable rights, and the other had none. Perfect liberty was not among them."

even carry it away across the Mississippi; and as for a nation wielding a concentrated, central power over all its parts, exercising untrammelled and absolute authority over all the States which created and were to maintain its existence—the idea, if it had been suggested even as a possibility, would have been scouted as absurd, or would have utterly thwarted all hope of forming a Federal Union at all. It seems incredible that a man so familiar with the facts of our history as Mr. Stevens ought to be, should venture to put such assertions as these before the world. He cannot believe them to be true in any history of the States which created and were to maintain its existence—the idea, if it had been suggested even as a possibility, would have been scouted as absurd, or would have utterly thwarted all hope of forming a Federal Union at all. It seems incredible that a man so familiar with the facts of our history as Mr. Stevens ought to be, should venture to put such assertions as these before the world. He cannot believe them to be true in any history of the States which created and were to maintain its existence—the idea, if it had been suggested even as a possibility, would have been scouted as absurd, or would have utterly thwarted all hope of forming a Federal Union at all.

Mr. Stevens thus finds no shadow of support, in the opinions and views of the fathers, for his doctrine that the elective franchise ranks among the "inalienable rights" which were proclaimed by the Declaration of Independence as belonging to every human being, and of which no human being could be deprived by any law, compact, or constitution whatever. Such a doctrine would have been scouted with contempt by every one of the men to whom we are indebted for our independence and our frame of government. That it is also at variance with every principle of the Constitution, and at war with any form whatever of safe and stable government, it will be very easy to show; but we have already exhausted our space. Mr. Stevens proceeds in his letter to urge that this "inalienable right" of universal suffrage was suspended by the Constitution of the United States, but that this suspension has been now removed by the fourteenth amendment to that instrument, and that now the whole framework of the Government must be reconstructed on that basis. We shall refer to this branch of the subject hereafter.

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