

SPIRIT OF THE PRESS.

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

The Immediate Duties of Congress.

From the N. Y. Nation.

Congress assembled this week under circumstances far different from any which either this or the preceding Congress ever had to meet. Sustained by the consciousness of popular favor, and fearing only to seem too slow for the popular will, the majority in the last two sessions were careless upon some points which careful thinkers knew were of vast importance to the country, and which, as the last few months have proved, were of no small importance to the party. For though it is singularly difficult to interest the American people in the philosophy of finance, and hard to make them appreciate any abstract propositions on the subject, they are quick enough to appreciate results, and perfectly ready to visit at their political managers with wrath if the course of public affairs is injurious to business.

It is well known that the past year has been a very unsatisfactory one to the commercial and manufacturing classes in every respect, and that the farmers have felt their taxes, direct and indirect, to be a load disproportionate to their income. The dissatisfaction thus excited, as every intelligent politician knows, has had a very large share in bringing about the reverses of this fall. Many of those Republicans who have deserted their party on account of the results of its financial policy, have been eager advocates of the very worst features of that policy, and have not now the least idea of the points in which it is really at fault. All this is not to be wondered at, nor will it be of any use to demonstrate to the grumblers that they could have done no better. Men who take the position of leaders in public affairs are bound to know how to succeed, and cannot excuse their incompetency by proving the equal incompetency of those who have preceded them.

The Roman was long cursed with the command of the army, and the people, who abandoned in excuses, when the best excuse they could have given was to resign positions for which they were totally unfitted by nature. The Republican party cannot afford to run the same career, for in politics Chancellorsville and Cold Harbor are rarely succeeded by Five Forks and Appomattox.

Congress assembled under the influence of a strongly adverse public sentiment, in appearance at least. The splendid majority of 1866, which sustained it twelve months ago has dwindled to almost nothing. What can be done to meet the wishes of the people, to restore public confidence in the party which Congress leads, and to give to the country that stability which parties are worse than useless if they do not subsolve?

The answer can be given wisely only by first ascertaining what are the grounds of popular discontent, and in what degree Congress is censurable for their existence. These grounds may, to the best of our comprehension of them, be briefly described as the negro question, taxation, currency, corruption. Local issues we omit, although important, because not within the province of Congress.

1. The negro question has had a more widespread influence than any other, although we do not think it has had so much effect in most of the States as other motives to discontent. We propose to deal fairly with this difficulty of politics, and to acknowledge frankly the extent to which it has interfered with party success, and also our own share of responsibility in the matter. It would be vain to deny that the policy of the Republican party to the cause of equal rights, in its application to the negro, has been one of the chief causes of its heavy losses in Ohio, California, New Jersey, and Maryland. The superior strength of the sentiment of vengeance in the popular mind over that of simple justice is strikingly illustrated by the result in Kansas, where the people have refused to enfranchise the negro, by over 8000 majority, and at the same time have disfranchised deserters and disloyal men, by over 1000 majority. It is still twice as popular to hang your enemies as to help your friends.

Negro suffrage at the North, moreover, is evidently intolerable to many who are willing to force it upon the South. Such has always been our own impression of the public mind. It is not a very generous or very creditable state of feeling; but it exists, nevertheless, and must be taken into account in studying political forces. Nor is it prudent, or even just, to denounce with bitterness those who participate in the sentiment. Some good and kind-hearted men, who oppose negro suffrage at the North, because it would increase the corruptible elements of the Republican party, already too numerous—favor it at the South because they see no other way to secure equal civil rights or the permanence of the Union. But negro suffrage is none too popular, whether existing North or South. It is not to be denied that the complete supremacy of the negro in some of the Southern States is extremely repulsive to many Republicans, and is deprecated by many more. We have on previous occasions expressed the opinion that the negro is not to be blamed for the course which he has taken; but for all that a wiser course was possible, especially in Virginia; and the Republican party may have to pay dearly for the want of more prudent management at the South. The consolidation of the negro vote was a desirable and indispensable means of reconstruction; but the co-operation of white men, even if a little tardy, should have been cheerfully accepted, and they should have been allowed a weight in the party proportioned to the numbers of their race, and not merely to their own number.

The practical question now, however, is whether Congress shall recede from the ground it has taken. We say emphatically, No! Congress, in so doing, would embody the ideas of freedom and nationality, has never had any option except between the path which it took last spring and total ruin. We do not mean that all the details of the Reconstruction acts were essential; but their main ideas, other than the disfranchising clauses, were of vital importance. We certainly do not advise the desertion of a wise and necessary path merely because it proves to be a little more difficult than was expected. This is an issue of life and death, and Congress would commit suicide if it should draw back from the work of Southern reconstruction. On this issue the leaders must fight to the last, waiting for the people to draw up to their support, and confident of final victory, no matter how long delayed.

But the people will not long hesitate upon this question if the political action of the colored race at the South is guided by wise counsels. The zeal of the negro has been sufficiently roused. He has shown that he knows his friends at the North. He must now be so guided as to demonstrate also his prudence, forbearance, and deference to superior wisdom. The government of the whole country, as well as its ability to protect himself by means

of his vote. And this can be brought about, we verily believe, by a judicious example at Washington, and a little wholesome advice from the leading members of Congress.

2. Taxation in all its departments is a subject of which Congress ought to deal with on far different principles from those which have hitherto guided its action—if, indeed, it can be said to have had any principles on the subject. It is well known that the intolerable pressure of taxation has had much to do with the untoward political results of the year. Many branches of business, once active and profitable, have been taxed into stagnation, and some have been actually taxed out of existence. Commissioner Wells, in his able report of last year, founded upon careful study of his subject, both theoretically and practically, pointed out in the clearest manner both the disease and the remedy. His labors were treated with contempt, and rewarded by a mean plot to abolish his office, one of the most useful and usefully filled of any in the United States. The plot failed, happily for the country; but his advice was discarded in favor of the crude notions of men who knew nothing whatever of the science which lies at the foundation of a sound fiscal system, and who cared for nothing except to push their own private schemes. We hope for a somewhat wiser course of action now. Political success, it is plain, cannot be had without reform in the mode of raising revenues. And if the majority of Congress are not yet satisfied that it is their best policy to follow the advice of the few men who, like Mr. Wells, understand the subject, instead of exercising their own intuitive genius at the expense of the country, they have not as much sense as we give them credit for.

3. The currency will probably be the first subject with which Congress will occupy itself; and we must frankly say that we expect no good from its action. The West is eager for "money," and the lower House will undoubtedly do its best to reopen the currency which Mr. McCulloch keeps closed so firmly. It will do its utmost for inflation; and inflation, no matter in what degree, means bankruptcy and disgrace. As the New York Times lately said, no issue of \$2,500,000,000 in currency is needed to decide our fate. \$400,000,000 will do it just as effectually; indeed, \$100,000,000 would pretty nearly settle the question. If the country once revives, in time of peace, the practice of debasing the currency by the issue of new legal-tenders, it can never stop short of total repudiation. Our reliance is placed upon the sound sense and integrity of the Senate, and that falling, we shall look hopefully, for the first time, for a veto from the President. It is his last chance for vindicating his reputation, and for making the veto honorable; and we sincerely pray that he may not let it slip if the occasion comes. But we also trust that the Senate will not let him have the occasion. The House, we fear, is past praying for.

4. The corruption which deeply affects both the political parties of the country is naturally and properly avenged by the people mainly upon the party in power. It would be idle to ask our public men to do anything against this monstrous evil directly. They are all cowards in its presence. But many of them are really desirous to put an end to it, or limit it, if they can do so without attacking it directly in the persons of its representatives. Even some men who have grown fat upon public plunder are heartily willing that all public robbery should be prevented; and some of them will render material aid in preventing others from profiting by their example. The most effective way in which Congress can do anything for this purpose, so desirable for the interests of the public and of the dominant party, is by simplifying the business of the revenue department and the machinery of public business in general. Every new tax is the parent of new frauds. Every superfluous official is an ally of corruption. He generally maintains his position by corrupting others, and his family by copying himself.

5. The local issues Congress has nothing to do with. There is an abundance of work before it in the fields of which we have spoken, and others which fall within its province. All considerations of public good, and, as a means to that, of party success, appeal to its courage, its moderation, its prudence, its integrity, for the full performance of its duty at this time. The maintenance of the Union, though probable, is not infallibly assured without guarantees for the maintenance of liberty and national good faith. To perfect these guarantees, to clear away the financial difficulties of the country, to purify the administration of public business—these are the duties of the present Congress. It will have the prayers of all good men for its success, and the blessings of all if it succeeds.

The Speech of the Emperor.

From the N. Y. Tribune.

The sword of Damocles, always suspended over the peace of Europe by a single hair, trembled as if it would fall when the Emperor Napoleon, in violation of his treaties, sent the French troops to Rome. No bolder step has been taken by France than this. It was a position from which it was impossible to recede, and if diplomacy failed to maintain it, France must have accepted war. The movement excited the jealousy of Prussia, and was openly meant to prevent the unity of Italy; throughout the whole of Europe it was unpopular in the extreme, and nowhere less popular than in France itself. It seemed as if Louis Napoleon had risked the peace of Europe, and the stability of his throne, for the sake of the Papal rule, and his interference was almost universally thought to be another blunder, like the Mexican invasion. But it was not a blunder; it was a policy. The Emperor understood the situation, and his boldness has been rewarded with success.

The speech of Napoleon before the Senate and Corps Legislatif explains everything. It explains why the Italian Government not only allowed him to defeat Italian unity, but actually aided his armies. It explains why Prussia, knowing France to be her great rival and natural enemy, again permitted Napoleon to make himself the arbiter of Western Europe, and adhered to a perfectly neutral policy. That explanation is the fear of republicanism. Garibaldi, when he advanced upon Rome, claiming it as the citadel of Italy, represented the people and the rights of the nation, and as their representative he was crushed. The armed intervention of France, the neutrality of Prussia, the arrest of Garibaldi by order of Victor Emmanuel, constituted a combination of monarchs against a republican movement. All the royalty of Europe was frightened and incensed that a poor farmer of Capri should appeal to peasants and shepherds, and attempt to settle, with a few thousands of red-shirted volunteers, a question that concerned cabinets and thrones. It was not in the power of the Italian Government alone to crush the Garibaldian movement, which had the full sympathy of the Italian people. The interference of other powers was necessary to prevent the people from demanding the throne of Victor Emmanuel, and France carried out, in behalf of all Europe, the principle that no change of bound-

aries, no acquisition of territory, should be effected except through the ruling Governments. Had Garibaldi captured Rome, and had the Kingdom of Italy, a terrible precedent would have been established. It would never have been forgotten that the people had asserted a right to act without consultation with their rulers, and the republican idea would have been established in absolute defiance and contempt of monarchy.

So Italy submitted to French interference; so Prussia yielded the supremacy to France; so Garibaldi was defeated, and the Pope protected, solely that the growth of democracy in Europe might be checked. It is not that any power, with the exception of Catholic Spain, is profoundly interested in the temporal rule of the Pope, but that all powers are concerned in the subjugation of the people. The question may be decided in favor of Italian unity by the General Congress which Louis Napoleon has proposed, but the right of the people to determine it will not be conceded.

But every effort to repress republicanism only adds to its strength and enthusiasm. Garibaldi, arrested in Italy, reappears in France. Even in Paris, under the bayonets of the Empire, the people make no secret of their indignation. At the cemetery of Montmartre, the people of Paris distributed the silent shouts of "Long live Garibaldi!" and "Down with the intervention!" The troops are distributed throughout the city; there are midnight inspections. Paris is garrisoned in every quarter. It is plain that the dynasty of Napoleon does not possess that undivided love of the people of which the Emperor boasts in his address. That boast is followed by a confession that "the public mind is exposed to excitement and dangerous impulses," and that to render these powerless he depends upon their suppression when required, and upon the energy and authority of the ruling power.

The Empire has lost far more than it has gained in the five years past. Mexico dealt one blow, Russia another, and it is not surprising to find Louis Napoleon declaring that "it is necessary to accept frankly the changes that have taken place on the other side of the Rhine." But it is equally necessary for him to perfect his military organization, and to prepare for an inevitable war, which is simply a question of postponement.

In all that the Emperor has said in favor of peace, we recognize little but the fear of war, and an uneasy consciousness of the dangers upon which his throne is built. But his mind of the people is their encouragement and opportunity. Men like Garibaldi never fail. Prisons cannot confine their influence, and even the grave cannot entomb their spirit. They are victorious even in defeat, and out of this ruined invasion of Rome is already born an unrest and a purpose which will work miracles in Europe. Democracy was never stronger than it is now, and if we need a proof of its strength, it is found in the accomplishment of German unity. It was not Bismarck that accomplished that; he answered him, the German people, and when they answered him, and he was forced to be silent, and France vainly beheld the arbitration of Europe passing out of her hands forever.

The Royal Speeches.

From the N. Y. Herald.

The English Parliament and the French Legislature have both been formally opened with speeches from the throne. The Emperor appeared and delivered his speech in person. The Queen's speech was read by a royal commission. There is some food for thought in this difference. The Emperor of France retains his popularity and his power by doing his own work. The Queen loses her popularity and her power by leaving her work to be done by others. Many things might be said on this subject, if we felt disposed to go into particulars. This much, at least, it is safe to say, that if a little less of Napoleonism would be a blessing to France, a little more of Napoleonism would be a blessing to England. Where monarchy exists, its success depends on the avoidance of two opposite extremes. Too much projected, monarchy is liable to become a bore; too little projected, it is liable to become a nuisance. We have the two extremes exemplified in France and England. Napoleon is too much of a despot. Victoria is too much of an automaton. It is no longer to be denied that if the French people had occasion to complain that the Government is too much in the hands of one man, the English people are of opinion that a little more of Napoleonism is the thing which, of all others, they most need. The fashionable world of London, including, of course, the West End shopkeepers, are heartily sick of the Queen's retirement. This feeling has been very much aggravated by the protracted illness of the Princess of Wales. Even the English people will get tired of monarchy if it cannot or will not keep up the excitement of a court.

The Queen's speech does not appear to have had any special excellence. We do not forget, of course, that the speech was composed by Lord Derby and his henchman Disraeli. It seems to have been guarded and cautious in the extreme. If it erred at all, it erred by defect. The Emperor's speech, on the other hand, was full and exhaustive. It is his own speech—an expression of the thoughts of his own active and observant mind—and no one can read it without feeling that it is worthy of the ruler of a great country. We are not blind admirers of the Emperor Napoleon. We think he has made during his reign some great and serious mistakes. But perfection is not to be looked for in mortality, even if that be the case of imperial philosophers. History will condemn him for the part he has played in the September Convention business; but history will justify the conclusion he has arrived at in regard to the consolidation of Germany. We are not satisfied that the Emperor is quite pleased to have on his northern border so powerful a neighbor as Prussia has become; but he has shown his wisdom by yielding gracefully and in time to that which he cannot resist. We cannot say that Napoleon has never attempted the impossible, but we can say that he has never stupidly persisted in the attempt. In this Roman difficulty Napoleon has a heavy task on hand; but we are not without reasons for believing that, if life is spared him, he will bring it to a satisfactory issue. The September Convention unquestionably rendered his interference necessary; but though originally, in our opinion, a grand mistake, the September Convention may prove the means of finally and satisfactorily settling the Roman question. No one is now more fully convinced than Napoleon himself that the Pope, to remain a great spiritual ruler, must cease to be a temporal prince. It will be seen, from the Emperor's remarks, that the efficiency of the army is the object of his constant solicitude. It is equally manifest from the tenor of his speech that a European war is no longer to be decided. To be ready for any emergency is wise policy; but his desire to maintain the efficiency of the army does not imply that the Emperor wishes war. It is gratifying to learn that the Western

Powers are as one as to the policy to be pursued in the East. If the doctors do not tender too much advice the "Sick Man" may yet become convalescent. The Roman question is the only difficulty Napoleon has on his hands. He has, he tells us, called to his aid the different European powers; but it remains to be seen whether they will respond to his call. Napoleon ought not to wait for their advice. He is strong enough to complete the work which he has begun in Italy. The real crowning of the edifice would be the dissolution of the temporal power of the Papacy. It was a French Emperor who laid the foundation of that power. It is fitting, now that its work is done, that a French Emperor should bring it to naught. The work of the second Charlemagne might thus be greater than that of the first.

Congress and the Prophets.

From the N. Y. Times.

The fact that Congress met and adjourned until Monday is a suggestive commentary on the sayings of certain prophets who foretold haste and vengeance. According to these predictions, not an hour was to be lost after the expiration of the prescribed interval. We were assured that the members impatiently awaited the chance of showing what they could do, and that within three days of their reassembling they would be in the midst of work. Why else were they averse to waiting until the day appointed for the regular session? Why, if not on the supposition that the business before them was too urgent to be deferred?

Only the reputation of the prophets suffers from the non-fulfillment of their prophecies; Congress does not. Their loss is its gain. It has shown discretion, which is more glorious than a prophetic guess. It has evinced a disposition to wait; and waiting implies coolness, reflection, judgment, and sense—qualities which are more noticeable because differing from the passions imputed to it by the prophets.

The Judiciary Committee's report on impeachment is promised for Monday, and we trust there will be no further delay in its presentation. The sooner that subject is disposed of the better. It has been used as a bugbear quite long enough. Now give us the whole benefit of the investigation. Tell us what the committee have discovered, and what they think of their discoveries. Bring the matter to an issue, and end it one way or another. If a tragedy is in rehearsal, preparations should be made for its solemnities; if a force, get it over, and clear the stage for weightier performances.

For in the coming session Congress must think of more than its own pleasure. It is charged with more than the good name of its members. The credit and future of the party it represents is in its keeping. Its action will confer renewed success on the Republican party, or entail upon it disaster. The statesmanship of the party is on trial, and by the work of next session will be judged. If the House will remember its responsibilities in this respect, we shall not hear much after next week of impeachment, or of the other extreme measures of which the prophets have positively spoken. They will be set aside summarily, to make room for more creditable liberality.

Liberality and wisdom in the final adjustment of the reconstruction question—fairness and sagacity in the disposal of currency difficulties—vigor, impartiality, and good faith in curtailing the expenditures of Government—boldness, thoroughness, and promptitude in the reduction of burdens, and the equitable apportionment of taxes that are to be levied—these are the more obvious of the many practical questions with which the fortunes of the Republican party are identified. Congress cannot evade them if it would, and its treatment of them will determine its own fate. Works, not faith, will achieve its salvation.

The Currency Question.

From the N. Y. Times.

A hard fight is impending between the supporters of Mr. McCulloch's policy of contraction and the Western champions of expansion. Both sides are already busy in Washington, and we anticipate a series of demonstrations on the subject whenever Congress begins its work. The currency is evidently to be one of the big things of the session, and unless moderation and good sense assert their supremacy at the outset, the mere agitation of the question will be injurious.

The business of the country suffers now more seriously from doubt and uncertainty than from any other cause. There is no actual dependency—no general apprehension of prolonged disaster; but there is a wide-spread want of confidence as a result of the absence of all fixedness in the purposes and policy of the Government. This evil will be aggravated from the moment Congress becomes the battleground of the conflicting interests which rely on legislation for relief. On the main issue the opposing parties are respectively strong enough to command attention.

Mr. McCulloch's plan is in the main sustained by the Senate, while in the House its opponents preponderate. No immediate danger of rash legislation therefore exists since now, as in the last session, the Senate may be relied upon to arrest any measure promoting inflation. But by raising the question in an ugly form, and keeping it constantly prominent, the inflationists of the House may effect as much mischief, temporarily, as though they were actually in the ascendant. If suffered to go on unchecked, they may unsettle everything, and by disturbing the public faith in values, may stimulate speculation. No business man will know what to buy or how to sell so long as there is a possibility of inflation. And the positiveness with which the measure will be urged by the Western Representatives will excite misgivings which the known conservatism of the Senate will but partially mitigate.

The inability of either House to do more than frustrate the action of the other will deepen the interest which attaches to the contest, and add force to its disturbing influences. No confidence can be felt in the future of a question which may at any time be revolutionized by the change of half-a-dozen votes. The House cannot hope to carry the expansion theory into practice, or even to reverse unqualifiedly the Treasury process of contraction. Nor can the Senate feel assured of its ability to supplement rejection of inflation by Treasury measures. In such circumstances, a deadlock is always imminent, and while that exists, or is feared, there can be no incentive to enterprise, and certainly no safety for trade. Only speculators can then hope to thrive.

Some early arrangement therefore appears desirable, as well to utilize the time of Congress as to preserve the country from needless embarrassment. If the inflationists are not strong enough to attain their object, and if the advocates of contraction are too weak to retain all the ground they now occupy, what would seem to be the rational course? Will it be better to keep the question open, with all its chances and annoyances, or to close it speedily, though at the cost of cherished preferences?

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Our own convictions have been in favor of contraction, and we suggest a modification of the law under which it has been carried on simply as a matter of expediency. We believe that a compromise might be effected now with no further surrender of principle than is implied in the stoppage of contraction. If there be a desire to contend for words, let it be said that contraction is for a season suspended. Let what has been done remain undisturbed. And on the hypothesis that more greenbacks cannot be called in without damage to mercantile interests, and that the discretionary power vested in the Secretary is a menace from which these interests should be freed, let it be declared that reliance will hereafter be placed upon the growing wants of the country to absorb any existing surplus in the volume of currency. By assuming this ground avowedly as a compromise, the inflationists may be deprived of the only auxiliaries that can render them formidable, the opposition to the Treasury will be reduced to one of degree, and not of principle, and the country will rejoice in a settlement which, while apparently postponing specie payments, will remove the uncertainty which, for some time past, has paralyzed all departments of business. The opportunity is one which Mr. McCulloch should not neglect. By a graceful surrender of points which he can scarcely hope to retain, he may conciliate a moderate and powerful interest, which the experience of the last year has alienated from him, and may counteract the efforts in which the advocates of inflation are engaged. The attainment of these ends is surely worth a trial.

Civil Rights for the Negroes.

From the N. Y. World.

According to the best judgment that can at present be formed, the Democratic party, in order to carry the Presidential election, must gain enough additional States to overbalance the electoral votes of the eleven which were members of the Southern Confederacy. Considering the large majority by which Brownlow was re-elected, the Republicans may count on Tennessee; and they expect to control the other ten by the votes of the negroes in the reconstructed governments. If no electoral votes were to be counted except from the States which participated in the election of 1864, the Democrats have already gained enough to elect a President. If the South were relieved of military coercion, we should carry the election by a most overwhelming majority. But we must not overlook the facts of the situation because they are disagreeable. It is the present radical Congress that will have the counting of the votes; and we should pay that reckless body a compliment it does not deserve if we supposed any scruples would stand in the way of their success.

It seems pretty well settled, therefore, that the Democratic party must not only forego any expectation of assistance from the South, but must make additional gains in the North to cancel the votes of the eleven States excluded in 1864. The labor which yet remains is to proselytize more citizens who have acted with the Republican party. If we fail by the lack of a single electoral vote, it will be as bad for the country as if we should get no electoral votes at all. Nor must we build anything upon the hope that the Republicans will split and run two candidates. We should accomplish less in that case than against the Republican party united. One of its segments would be a half-way house to defeat voters. The election would go into the House, where the radical candidate would be elected even if he had not a tenth of the electoral votes. If, by nominating General Grant, or any other blinding device, the Republicans can prevent our gaining States enough in the West to balance the reconstructed negroes, we shall be no better off, for any practical purpose, than we were in 1864, although we are already certain of a majority of the electoral votes given in that election.

It will be seen from this exhibit that Democrats who have such an overweening sense of the party strength as to think there is no further need of proselytizing Republicans, are unwise counselors. If we cannot make out a case fitted to satisfy candid Republicans, we shall run a vigorous and splendid race, but fail to win the prize. The essential requirement is to gain States enough to balance the Southern rotten boroughs. The crisis is too important for us to act on mistaken calculations. If we expect to succeed, we must not be puffed up by our late resplendent successes, but proceed upon such plain principles of justice and conciliation as will strengthen our hold upon public confidence and extend our victories.

We need to present a just and reasonable platform on the negro question; one which will not repel moderate Republicans and on which the Democratic party can be thoroughly united. The negro question is the knot of the difficulty, and we cannot ignore it. There are some points on which there is the most entire and decided unanimity among Democrats, and on which the fixedness of their views is no hindrance to success. We believe, for example, all as one man, that the control of the suffrage belongs to the States, and can never be given to the Federal Government without a gross violation of an amendment of the Constitution. Our strenuous

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