

2 SPIRIT OF THE PRESS.

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

General Grant as a Statesman.

From the N. Y. Tribune.

In General Grant's contact with political affairs, and the administration of civil office, his conduct has been marked at once by vigor, prudence, judgment, and a sagacious aptitude for discerning and following the policy which, when developed into action, would meet with the approval of the masses of loyal men. His difference with President Johnson's administration dates from his protest against the removal of General Sheridan. The wisdom of his objection to Sheridan's removal has been justified by the fact that under his successors, Hancock and Buchanan, the average number of murders and other acts of violence in these States has so increased as to amount to a state of rebellion. General Grant stated in his protest that Sheridan's removal "would only be regarded as an effort to defeat the laws of Congress." Andrew Johnson had not then developed his policy of annulling these laws as void, and repudiated the removal of Sheridan because "he has seriously interfered with the harmonious, satisfactory, and speedy execution of the acts of Congress." General Grant wrote then that "it is unmistakably the expressed wish of the country that General Sheridan should not be removed." The President replied that he was not aware that the question had ever been submitted to the people for determination. The strong, plain common sense of Grant pierced the falsehoods and evasions of the would-be cunning politician, and demonstrated that calm, honest judgment is wiser and deeper than such extreme and dishonest flattery. The unanimous vote of the Convention of the loyal people for General Grant, and the repudiation of Johnson by all except a few Rebel delegates in a disloyal Convention, show with equal force how faithfully the former interpreted the will of the people, and how completely the latter sold himself for a song. And yet Johnson rises above Seymour in every element, whether of experience or character, which would constitute a statesman as far as Grant rises above Johnson.

General Grant's contact with political issues evinces a determination not to carry any "policy" or "doctrine" so such an extreme as interferes with other doctrines equally important. He recognizes the many-sidedness of truth and duty. Thus, on November 1, 1865, we find him instructing Sheridan "to refrain from interference with the execution of the civil law in Florida," and that "the duty of the military is to encourage the enforcement of the civil law and order to the fullest extent." Yet, while these instructions were good for Florida in November, we find him recommending wholly different treatment for Texas in the January following. He then writes to the Secretary of War: "In my opinion, the great number of murders of Union men and freedmen in Texas, not only as a rule unpunished but investigated, constitute practically a state of insurrection, and I therefore recommend a declaration of martial law in Texas." "Martial law would give security, or comparatively so, to all classes of citizens, without regard to race, color, or political opinions, and could be continued until society was capable of protecting itself, or until the State is returned to its full relation with the Union." The recent report of the Investigating Committee of the Texas Convention shows that more than 1000 murders have been committed in that State since the close of the war, beside all other crimes of violence. A very large proportion of these were murders of freedmen by whites. But, while the "Ku-Klux" negro-killers of Texas were thus at large, the anxiety of the (Rebel) Provisional Governor, Throckmorton, was directed, not to the actual murders of the people of Texas by each other, but to casual alleged murders by Indians on the frontier. Ostensibly to put down Indian hostilities, he asked leave to enroll 1000 mounted men, who would have been composed entirely of ex-Rebel troops, and would have substantially organized the Ku-Klux Klan into a militia. General Grant forwarded additional regular troops sufficient to protect the frontier against the Indians, but refused to sanction the Rebel militia, instructing Sheridan as follows:—"Great care will have to be observed so that no just cause of complaint can be used against the army for not giving proper protection to the citizens of Texas against Indian hostilities. At the same time, it is important that loyal and law-abiding citizens should have protection against the violence disposed in their midst."

No part of General Grant's political career better illustrates his sagacity in detecting the wiles and follies of the cunning and deceitful men, than his conduct during the troubles in Maryland attending the removal of the Police Commissioners of Baltimore by Governor Swann. The removal was in pursuance of a political plan of the Governor to appoint such a police as would allow all the Maryland Rebels excluded from the polls by the Constitution to vote, and so transfer the power of the State from the hands of the few who had been loyal during the war to the majority who had not. Had the loyal minority followed the counsel of Winter Davis and given the ballot to the hands of Maryland, the State could not have been wrested from the control of loyal men. This not having been done, the Rebel plan through the active aid of Andrew Johnson, has succeeded, and the same classes of Maryland voters and politicians who shed the first blood of the war now rule the State. The constitutional power of the Governor to remove the Commissioners was open to grave doubts; and, as no decision of the courts could be obtained upon this question before the election would transfer each party was desirous to secure possession of the offices and control of the police, and to compel the other to resort to the courts for redress. The following letter, written by General Grant to the President on October 24, shows his attitude upon the question:—"I cannot see the possible necessity for calling in the aid of the military in advance of even the case (the removal of said Commissioners) which is to be tried."

"The conviction is forced on my mind that no reason now exists for giving or promising the military aid of the Government to enforce the laws of Maryland. The tendency of giving such aid or promise would be to produce the very result intended to be avoided. So far, there seems to be merely a very bitter contest for political ascendancy in the State. Military interference would be interpreted as giving aid to one of the parties, and would show pure the intentions, or guarded or just the instructions. It is a contingency I hope never to see arise in this country, and I do not occupy the position of general-in-chief of the army, to have to send troops into a State in full relations with the Government, on the eve of an election, to preserve the peace."

The Governor would not make the order of removal without knowing in advance that he could enforce it, and this he could only do by the aid of the President and the United States army. The plan, therefore, was to use the Federal army, through the President, to restore the Rebels of Maryland to the control of the State. The loyal men of Maryland had no design to fight against Federal troops. They would not have objected to exchange hand blows with the returned Rebels of Lee's army.

But it was necessary, in order to induce Governor Swann to make the order of removal, and to terrify the loyal men into submitting to it, to make known to both that the President would use the army on the Rebel side. This he did by a published letter, dated October 25, 1866, to Secretary Stanton, stating that "serious troubles are apprehended from a conflict of authority between the Executive of the State of Maryland and the Police Commissioners of the city of Baltimore," and that "in the event of serious infractions of the laws, the Government of the United States might be called upon to aid in their suppression." He, therefore, demanded to know what force would be available for prompt use; and, on being informed that the available forces were one thousand five hundred and fifty men, directed them to be increased.

On the next day, October 26, the President undertook to send General Grant away from the scene of impending rebellion, by ordering him to proceed to some point on our Mexican frontier, to give the aid of his advice," and "by his presence and advice to co-operate with our Minister to Mexico" in "carrying out the instructions of the Secretary of State," relative to the attitude of the United States Government on the evacuation of Mexico by Maximilian. As Buchanan Cabinet had sent General Scott to attend to the Northwestern Boundary question on the eve of the Rebellion, so Andrew Johnson aimed to get rid of General Grant on the eve of the expected rebellion in Maryland. But General Grant did not go. He was first requested verbally to accept this mission on October 21, and declined in the following apt reply:—"HEADQUARTERS ARMY OF THE UNITED STATES, WASHINGTON, Oct. 21, 1866.—On further full reflection upon the subject of my accepting the mission proposed by you in your interview of Wednesday, I have most respectfully to beg to be excused from the duty proposed. It is a diplomatic office, for which I am not fitted by education or taste. It has necessarily to be conducted under the State Department, with which my duties do not connect. And, should I, under the circumstances, be requested to repeat my request to be excused from the performance of a duty entirely out of my sphere, and one for which I can do so much better performed by others."

"His Excellency, A. Johnson, President, etc." Not content with this answer the President renewed his request in Cabinet meeting on the 23d, and it was again declined. Nevertheless, an official order, concluded in the form of a request, was issued on the 27th, and this he finally and firmly declined to comply with, though his refusal was couched in the like polite form of a request to be excused. General Sherman was, therefore, appointed in his stead, went to Mexico, and returned without any real business, as a cover to the President's design to get Grant out of the way during the expected rebellion of the loyal men of Maryland. There can be no doubt that, if the President could have persuaded the Republicans of Maryland into an act of war against the United States, it would have been an immense gain to the Democratic party. But in this design, too, through the presence and influence of General Grant, Mr. Johnson was foiled. The election passed off peacefully. The Democratic party remained, as therefore, the only one that had ever fired upon the National flag. The President's audacity and cunning achieved a petty triumph in the change of Police Commissioners and the subsequent admission of the Maryland Rebels to vote, whereby they obtain political control of the State. But the firmness and sagacity of Grant had won a greater triumph in preventing bloodshed, and maintaining the ascendancy of the Courts and the law over military force.

A Weak Point in the Democratic Position. From the N. Y. Times. The evening Democratic journal of this city has nothing but contempt for those members of its party who separated from it during the war, and now oppose the election of Seymour and Blair. The feeling is probably natural, and is certainly reciprocal. The dislike of a powerful element whose continued presence is a rebuke to the party policy, has a counterpart in the distrust with which War Democrats regard its present leaders. The accumulating evidence of the refusal of the War Democracy to support the platform and the nominees of the New York Convention, is the best answer to the boasting of the party press. Before the Convention it was admitted that the only hope of success rested upon the ability of the party to regain lost votes, and to acquire the votes of moderate men not hitherto associated with it. In their words they confessed that without the help of War Democrats and conservative Republicans, the Democratic ticket could not be elected. The statement was positive, and so obviously true, that it passed unchallenged. Its realization, however, is now impossible. Not a single conservative Republican has raised his voice in favor of Seymour; on the contrary, the entire force of moderate Republicans is heartily enlisted under the Grant banner. And the war democrats are moving in the same direction. The New York nomination disgruntled them. They discovered that they must choose between repudiation of their loyal record and repudiation of the party action; and they are deciding as consistent men only can. The earliest murmurs of discontent came from California, and were echoed in Maine. Maryland invests them with organized authority, and in this city they will soon assume definite and practical form. The feeling they express is universal, and its result will be fatal to the only tangible ground of confidence of which the Democratic organs have ventured to boast.

The prospect is not improved by the alliance of Blair and Hancock. The former has simply performed a somersault, and is trying to undo as a politician the work he helped to do as a soldier. Hancock, again, after having been entrapped by partisan flattery, operating on unwise ambition, has disappeared from an arena which he never should have entered. It is known, however, that the disappointment he felt personally was exceeded by the disgust which the preference of the Convention awakened within him. And as it is with Hancock, so it is generally with the War Democrats who have not yet openly espoused the cause of Grant. They are indifferent and hesitating, the open question being whether they shall remain passive or swell the Republican ranks. No amount of support which the Democracy can obtain at the South will compensate for the loss of those Northern elements of strength on which its shrewdest calculators relied. They proclaimed dependence on dissatisfied Republicans and alienated Democrats, and they will obtain neither.

"Being Dead he Yet Speaketh." From the N. Y. World. The staple of discussion in the Republican press, since the opening of the Presidential canvass, is the identity of the pending issues with the questions of the late war. They constantly represent it as a new contest between rebellion and loyalty, in which the Democratic party stand on the same ground occupied by the South during the war, and the Republican party as still battling for the same principles for which the Union soldiers fought. The industries threatening of the old straw in which the Republican writers

thus employ themselves, shows how little life there is in the canvass on their side. Instead of dealing with vital, living questions, they go back to the dead past, and try to have it believed that the North and the South are still engaged in a contention about the questions which were forever settled by the war. They might as well stick a spear-head in the ground and expect it to bud and blossom, as to think the public mind can be again interested in the obsolete question of secession. But if secession is no longer an issue, what do the Republicans mean by their incessant vituperation of the Southern whites as Rebels, and of the Democratic party as their abettors in rebellion?

The turn which the supporters of General Grant attempt to give to the canvass makes it proper to recall the object for which the war was prosecuted. On this topic there can be, for Republicans, no higher authority than the late President Lincoln. If the Democratic party are rebels, then he was a rebel throughout his administration, and died an incorrigible rebel, plotting the very things which the radicals have been strenuously opposing ever since his death. He made emancipation itself entirely subordinate to the restoration of the Union. He aided in reconstructing Louisiana and Arkansas on a white basis. The last speech he made was a strenuous protest against undoing his work. General Grant and Secretary Stanton both swore, last year, before a committee of Congress, that President Johnson's plan, as embodied in his North Carolina proclamation—the model of all the others—was the identical plan of Mr. Lincoln, and a copy from his draft. The Democratic party stand on the very ground occupied by President Johnson's predecessor; and when attempts are made to identify their position with that of the rebels, it is proper to recall this fact, which explodes the aspersion, and puts its authors to shame. If we are disloyal, we will force the Republicans to acknowledge that we are in good company.

We ask those who pretend to reverse the memory of Mr. Lincoln, and yet denounce Democrats as Rebels, to consider the following language used by him in the second year of the war:—"If there be those," said he, "who would not save the Union unless they could at the same time save slavery, I do not agree with them. If there be those who would not save the Union unless they could at the same time destroy slavery, I do not agree with them. My paramount object in this struggle is to save the Union, and it is not either to destroy or to preserve slavery. If I could save the Union without freeing any slave I would do it; and if I could do it by freeing all the slaves, I would do it; and if I could do it by freeing some and leaving others alone, I would also do that. What I do about slavery and the colored race, I do because I believe it helps to save the Union; and what I forbear, I forbear because I do not believe it would help to save the Union. I shall do less whenever I shall believe what I am doing hurts the cause, and I shall do more whenever I shall believe doing more will help the cause."

The Union would have been completely restored three years ago if the Republican party had acted in the spirit of this patriotic utterance. The spirit of loyalty, as embodied in the Chief Magistrate who conducted the war, required the Union to be restored at the earliest moment possible, and not to be delayed a single day in behalf of the special interests of the colored race. This was Mr. Lincoln's doctrine, and it is also the doctrine of the Democratic party. When the Republicans accuse us of standing where the Rebels stood in the late war, we have a triumphant reply in the fact that we stand precisely where the leader of the loyal cause stood in the late war. If that position was consistent with his patriotism, why may it not be with ours?

Another striking proof of the liberality with which he was disposed to treat the Rebels immediately on their laying down their arms, is found in the terms he offered them when he and Secretary Seward attended the famous conference on shipboard, at Hampton Roads, in February, 1865. Even the instructions to Mr. Seward, which were written for the public and intended as a screen or cover to what actually took place, insisted on nothing but the disbanding of the Southern armies and acquiescence in emancipation. But we lay the chief stress on Mr. Lincoln's last speech, just before his assassination, in reference to the reconstruction he had begun in Louisiana, and on the fact testified to by General Grant and Mr. Stanton that President Johnson's North Carolina proclamation was copied from Mr. Lincoln's draft. These proofs are the most important, because they show what Mr. Lincoln's mind was after the war had ended, and reconstruction had become the foremost problem in the national councils. If the Republicans will insist on going back to Mr. Lincoln's time, and identifying the present issues with the old questions, we are prepared to give them all they want of that kind of controversy.

Will the People Bear the Enormous Taxation? From the N. Y. Herald. There is probably no greater anomaly in modern times than is seen in this country—that a people under a popular Republican Government—a government chosen by themselves and changed every few years—should submit to a burden of taxation without parallel in the world. That they submitted to this cheerfully in time of a great civil war for the sake of preserving the life and unity of the republic showed their patriotism. They were willing, too, to give the Government a reasonable time to adjust the finances and to discharge the floating obligations arising from the war. But it is likely they will continue to bear war taxes and expenditures years after peace has been established? Over three years have elapsed since the war ended, and the taxes amount to more than four hundred and sixty millions of dollars a year—a larger sum than that raised and expended by the most costly monarchical government in the world. It is monstrous. The people are becoming restless and disgruntled, and will certainly seek a remedy either in a change of their public servants or in repudiation of the debt. Unless able and more honest men be elected to Congress—men who will see the necessity of economy, and have the courage to cut down all unnecessary expenditures, and bring them to something like what they were before the war—it will not be long before we shall hear significant and deep mutterings of repudiation from one end of the country to the other.

The present Congress is without ability to grasp the subject of national finances and taxation, and is withal recklessly extravagant in making appropriations for all sorts of things and jobs. Even when it took off about a hundred millions of taxation this was done for the benefit of manufacturers, and for the manufacturers of New England, especially, who are but a small part of the community. The people generally will not feel the reduction. The effect will be merely to increase the profits of the manufacturers. Had the tax on tea, coffee, sugar and other articles of prime necessity been greatly reduced or abolished, the people everywhere would have been benefited. There would have been lessening the burden of taxation in a way to be felt by every working-man's family. But the late acts of Congress reducing taxes will be of advantage only to a few manufacturers. Congress began at the

wrong end. It is of no use, however, to reduce the taxes while the expenditures are so enormous, for that will only bring a depleted Treasury and bankrupt Government. The first thing to be done is to reduce the expenditures two hundred millions or more. The whole cost of the Government in all departments and expenses, independent of the interest on the national debt, ought not to be over a hundred millions a year. Indeed, it ought to be less. Two hundred and fifty millions revenue is ample. Yet we see it was over four hundred and sixty millions last year. This is the great question for the American people now to consider. And in the coming Congressional elections they should take care that the incapable, reckless, and extravagant members of the present Congress be left at home to cultivate potatoes, which they may understand better, and that fresh and more capable men be sent to Washington.

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