

SPIRIT OF THE PRESS.

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

The Irreversible Record.

From the N. Y. Independent.

We have recently had some terrible fighting in this country. Battle succeeded battle in quick succession for four years; myriads of lives were sacrificed; the land was peopled with orphans and widows; and the loyal citizens bowed themselves willingly to receive the burden of a prodigious national debt. We have compressed the history of ages into a span; heroes have risen and disappeared almost with the rapidity of a stage performance; great deeds, both of benevolence and valor, thronged into being, thick and close, like the stalks of a cornfield; war has sown the soil of the country with monuments and biographies, all fresh from the baptism of blood. And now that we are emerging from the smoke and din of conflict, and groping about for the materials and implements of "reconstruction," it is well to ask what we have had all this fuss about. What meant the great storm of fire and blood that shook the world?

The plain story requires but a word to tell it. The South had become impatient of contradiction; the free printing and free speech of the North had come to irritate them with greater and greater boldness, and slavery seemed to be in jeopardy. Went to rally, and to find arising submission on the other side, they resolved on secession. The only condition on which they could have been persuaded to forego their scheme was that slavery should be permitted to intrench itself in the empire law in the form of an amendment, putting Northern cattle and horses and Southern slaves on a footing of equality. This was the Rebel alternative—"Put slavery into the Constitution, or we separate." With the loyal people of the country neither of these was possible, or even to be thought of. Neither could slavery go up, nor the South go off. Upon this issue the war began. It was at once broadly national and profoundly moral. It involved the wholeness of the flag, and the integrity of the decalogue. Men who cared nothing for religion, or for the profound questions of ethics, rallied with boundless ardor to the rescue of the Union. The impulses of patriotism were to them in the place of deeper considerations. The Christian churches of the North felt with the crowd the emotion of patriotism; but below these the moral and spiritual aspects of the contest heaved and struggled for utterance in a moral earthquake.

We appeal to the loyal, virtuous millions all over the country to testify whether they were not impelled to enthusiasm and perseverance in the struggle even more by the motives of conscience than by those of simple patriotism? We felt that we were watched by heaven and earth, by God and man; that we were fighting the battle of humanity; that we were meeting a foe bent on setting up an empire which would have been a monstrosity among Governments, an anachronism in the history of the century—in which every known crime would safely repose in the arms of the law; in which the law, naturally the sanctuary of the weak against the strong and wicked, should become a mere halter, one end in the hand of the white man, the other about the neck of the black man.

While we fought, and spent our treasures, and gave up our children, we looked up to heaven and said—We are right. God demands this at our hands; and the demands of humanity demand it. Not to go on is infamy—not the infamy of defeat merely, but the deadlier infamy of a great public crime which shall plead against us, trumpet-tongued, in the presence of the hissing nations and the pitying but despising angels. We went on. We demanded of Congress to be taxed; we raised our flag on every church, amid prayers and hymns; we taught our children to breathe the names of our defenders; we encouraged the soldiers with our benedictions; we sent the ministers of religion and of good nursing after them into the field; we kept commemorative lists of the "boys" neatly framed and hung up on the walls of our Sunday Schools; we read their letters as a part of the Sunday School and prayer meeting exercises; we remembered and named them in our supplications. In a word, we threw our whole heart and soul, our patriotism, our conscience, our religion, into the war for the Union—in this way making up the stupendous record.

May we be told, indeed, that our foes were equally persuaded that they were right. Suppose it to have been so—yet we know they were wrong—this was a war against Christ's law of love; it was robbery and kidnapping, defending their acquisitions with the piffling forms of honorable war. Robbery finally fell under the strokes of Justice and Providence. The nation is victor. She looks back to read her record, and what are the lines she traces? To what principles do they commit us? What party in politics does she look upon with pleasure? Whom can she trust to take care of the Union just saved? Who will keep inviolate our war record? It is Wade Hampton, Howell Cobb, Robert Toombs, and their confederates in rebellion, who are making the whole country, North and South, to ring with the defiant assertion that their revolt is not the "lost cause" but the Democratic party of the North, who, with honorable exceptions, labored to prevent this success of our arms during the war, and gave the R-bels public and private "aid and comfort." Is it the Democratic Convention, lately sitting in New York, in which Copperheads and Rebel unites their inspiration and their patriotism for the public good; and where Forrest, Vallandigham, and the spirit of Wilkes Booth entered into a compact to restore the Rebels to power? Is it Andrew Johnson, the Tennessee Moses, the famous plebeian of the 4th of March, 1865, who furnishes to the "poor whites" of the country such an example of getting up in the world and of pulling down the representatives of the people? Is it he, at once gymnast and geometrician, "swinging" to admiration, and yet always sober enough to keep the "circle"? Is it Merry Andrew, the hero of votes? Or, finally, is it Seymour and Blair, who, fighting in opposite camps during the war, have recently effected a compromise by mutually joining hands with the oddly reconstructed Hampton, the whole three of them giving their sacred pledge to rip up the work of Congress, if need be, with the broken sword of the chivalry? Who is it?

Our war record is made. It is the pride and glory of the nation. It must and will be kept. It is not only a record of magnificent and successful war; it is also a record of moral principle, of broken chains, of human enfranchisement, of false pride humiliated, of horrid Moche's fallen, of millions of men and women snatched from concubinage and converted into husbands and wives, of foreign tyrants rebuked, and of remotest oppressed nations made hopeful of a better day. This proud record not only stands or falls with the honor of our country; its security is pledged by the advancement of humanity. If mankind has a noble destiny, as has our record; and the party organized against it is destined to a second and final defeat. The true men who

contended before will not be cheated. They did not venture in vain. They will see through every device, and will conquer again.

An Epistle to Good People.

From the N. Y. Tribune.

We have been asking answers for a week past, if not longer, how a good man can possibly vote the Democratic ticket at the approaching Presidential election, and the question seems precisely a fitting one to put to the good people themselves. We want it understood that we are not denying that there are honest and even pious men among the Democrats; our question only touches the "how." We are anxious to know the mental and moral processes by which genuine goodness reaches a position on the Democratic platform; and if our honest friends will give us a moment or two in private, and allow us to use a little epistolary directness, we will state our troubles. If we have now come together, and you are honest and good, and we are candid inquirers, allow us to believe that you hold in abhorrence the system of slavery which the late war swept away. We must take this for granted, as we do your honesty. In the light of these days, we are sure you would not renege the horrors of the past, and put back slavery into the heart of the law, whose idea is mingled of justice and purity, and whose proudest office it is to maintain the rights of all, especially of the weak. Do not tell us we are reviving dead and buried issues; that this style of talk belongs to the past. We thought so, too, till quite lately; but we were clearly mistaken. It seems that even the most flagrant wrongs, when once grown into men's passions and prejudices and interests, have even more lives than a cat—are harder to kill than the snake, which, however perfectly slain early in the morning, will, it is said, persist in moving its tail till sunset. The giant blows of Grant, at the head of the Union hosts, have stretched slavery on its back throughout the length of its recent domain; but the day is long—the sunset delays to come. To vote the Seymour and Blair is to vote for slavery—not, indeed, as a thing actually existing in due form, but in spirit and in the abstract. This "sum of all villainies," alarmed for its life, kindled the fires of revolution, and gave its myriads of citizens to Molech. It supped on horrors, and rose from every repeat with a keener appetite; but the waiting victims proved too numerous, and it fell a sacrifice to its own crimes. While it had a formal existence, the Democratic party loved it well, waited on it, sung its praises with ecstasy, and knew no higher authority. At that time, however, it was able to pay for its honors, and the worship rendered it found its justification in self-interest. If it kicked its votaries about as it liked, as suited its mood, it made compensation with golden corn from the official crib, or with some office provided with a separate crib of its own. Devotion to slavery under such circumstances was only a horrid form of selfishness. But to love it now, when it is little more than a shadow or a memory, when its head has been smashed and its tail only shake its defiant tail to indicate lingering life, is to give to the heart—to love its idea, and to honor it for its own dear sake.

Is not this the precise position of the Seymour and Blair party? Is not that party made up of the disciples of peace, with every genuine War Democrat counted out, and the actual Rebels, the men who, for the sake of slavery, ventured their all? Yes, the Convention of the Fourth of July was a gathering of mourners for slavery. Its platform said "let us restore the lost cause," the cause whose chief benefactors were the auction-block and the fierce red lash; let us tear power from the clutch of the foes of slavery; let us undo the work of reconstruction, a product of malignant hostility to slavery; let us repudiate the debt made in enslaving slavery; let us restore to power the beaten friends of human bondage; let us remand the wickedly enfranchised blacks, who dared to sympathize with their deliverers, and to bear arms against their own sacred bondage, to the tender mercies of their old masters."

Dear brethren, honest and earnest, are not these words true? Are not the intent and quality of the Convention precisely the same as those of the Rebellion? Have Wade Hampton, and Forrest, and Semmes repented of their crimes against liberty? Do they not rather glory in their infamy, and insist on converting it into fame, by means of their Democratic allies? Is not this pride and this purpose most cordially met by the Democratic party of the North? Was not the spirit of the slaveholders' Rebellion the ruling and characterizing spirit of the Convention? Did it not seek to be a Convention of ex-Rebels, with their Northern brethren simply present and aiding? Is not such a movement an effort to stop and even to reverse the progress of civilization—a reaction in favor of a political philosophy which gave laboring men the name of "mudsills," which declared it essential to a good government that capital should own labor, whether white or black? Honest men! good men and true! ye who put morality and justice as much above the claims of party as heaven above earth; ye who pity the oppressed and glory in naming slaves into people, can you bring yourselves to accept the spirit of this Convention, and along with Hampton and Forrest and their Democratic followers, vote to honor and exalt, or even to palliate the crimes of the Rebellion?

Our question is not how an honest Southern man can vote the Seymour ticket. His whole life has been colored by slavery, and his prejudices hold him in thrall without his suspecting it. We are not puzzled by the course of men who know nothing higher than political success, and are incapable of seeing that government has any relations to morality. We are not even surprised at the conduct of ignorant men who, under the impulses of a genuine but shallow patriotism, fought in the loyal ranks during the Rebellion, but are now found following in the train of their old enemies. The moral element was not in the struggle with them, and its serious discussion now offends them. But a Seymour and Blair ticket in the hand of a good and thoughtful person is past our comprehension.

Why the 'Tribune' Trims.

From the N. Y. World.

It is apparently impossible to get a straightforward answer from the Tribune to a straightforward question. But we shall keep on trying. We ask the Tribune whether it does or does not support Governor Brownlow, of Tennessee, in his attempt to inaugurate civil war in that State by raising a "State army" for use at the polls in November.

Of course the Tribune knows perfectly well that Brownlow is a virulent political ruffian, whose name already stinks in the nostrils of decent Republicans; and whose career in Tennessee is an open scandal to American citizenship and the American character. But the Tribune has more than once before this applauded, under stress of political weather, the acts and words of creatures no more respectable than Brownlow. If it really dares to "face the music" of its own party it ought to do so, no matter by whom that music may be blown and beaten forth upon the aching ears of men. Why, then, does it "dodge" our question about Brownlow? Why does it wander off into a column of cheap historical reminiscences about the "secession of Tennessee," the "fall of Fort Donelson," the "advance of Grant," and all the rest of it?

Bogus Equality.

From the N. Y. World.

If there be one thing on which the radicals have particularly insisted it is that all men are equal—except "rebels." That all States are equal is, however, a matter that these radicals have just as particularly opposed, and this inequality of equalities suggests a reflection or two that is thrown out for the consideration of whom it may concern. States are, after all, but aggregations of men, and as these aggregations are more or less numerous, it follows that in a certain sense there is reason in the radical view of State inequality. They do not say, to be sure, that the States are unequal, but they do say that, and this action of theirs, taken in conjunction with the dogma of the equality of all men, will some day grind radicalism into powder in its own strongholds. Some days a strong man will rise, and if, looking at the field, he sees that this dogma of equality can only be gotten out of the people by a *reductio ad absurdum*, he will proceed to that reduction, and in the process utterly tritrate the saints into nothingness. This is about the process. If all men are equal, a man in New York should count as much in the Government as a man in Rhode Island; but it so happens that one Rhode Islander is, governmentally speaking, equal to four New Yorkers. On the figures of the last Presidential election it takes 22,143 voters in this State to elect one man to the Congress, whereas for New England the rate is 12,088. Now, if we are to have equality, if one man really is as good as any other man, if the States are not equal, but unequal; if the Constitution is to be dispensed with and the Higher Law need instead, down with this New England inequality. Away with it. Let us commend the poisoned chalice prepared for others' lips to the taste of its own fabricators.

The voter in Maine, Massachusetts, Connecticut, and New Hampshire is one hundred and fifty per cent. better than the voter in New York or Ohio; in Vermont he is two hundred per cent. better; in Rhode Island four hundred and fifty per cent., or four and a half times as good. This, it is evident, is worse than the three-fifths rule, for that was only sixty per cent. less than half of the minimum New England per cent., when all is said and done. Down with the bogus equality of the Saints.

Personal Abuse—Grant and Jackson.

From the N. Y. Herald.

There is a curious similarity between the present Presidential canvass and that of General Jackson in 1828. In Jackson's time there was no limit to the volume of abuse poured down him by his political opponents; yet he not only survived the attacks, but rose upon the very waves of personal hostility, until he was lifted into the highest place in the Government. Every effort to defame his character proved only a stepping-stone to his success, and the intemperance with which his private life was assailed served as but a fanning gear to wait him into the Presidential chair. Twice this game of his purblind enemies was tried. The phials of wrath were opened again in 1832. We will not repeat the language which was applied to General Jackson or the opprobrious names which were heaped upon him. We will not recall the violence with which the sacred veil that should have sheltered the sanctity of his home was torn asunder. Suffice it to say that this method of political antagonism defeated itself, as it is very likely to do now in the case of General Grant; for the same plan is being pursued by the public prints engaged in the object of defeating his election.

During the past two or three years the Democratic party has been governed by two distinguished newspaper men—one in the East and one in the West—Sam Barlow representing the One, and Broke Emerson representing the Occident. The wit of the one, strange though it was, and the dullness of the other, which long since reached the limit of toleration, might have been a little original in the beginning, when they opened fire upon the character of General Grant, because there is always a piquancy about anything novel, even though it runs in a coarse or stupid vein. To assail a man who is admittedly one of the leading characters of the age, whose reputation is without spot or stain, whose fame stands high not only in his own country, but in all Europe, is to say the least of it, a very petty piece of business, and only shows the want of rightness of these partisan journals which by defaming him, would make him greater than Jackson in the days when personal abuse of the candidate resulted in his triumph. The abusive tone of the Democratic organs may have won a little popularity at first, but we see that it has ended in almost universal disgust. The wit and humor with which the organ of Brick Pomeroy garishes its violent attacks upon the character of public men were somewhat of a relief to the dullness, the empty pomposity and horrible brutality of Sam Barlow and his clan. If General Grant is elected he may safely claim that he is largely indebted to these journals for his success.

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