

SPIRIT OF THE PRESS.

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

Lay Off the Uniforms.

From the N. Y. Times. During his late triumphal journey from Galena to Washington, General Grant passed through a town where an enthusiastic procession of uniformed "Boys in Blue" greeted him, and to whom, accordingly, he spoke as follows:—

"Gentlemen—I see some of you in uniforms. You laid them off three years ago, and you can now lay them off again, and we will have peace. Good night."

Doubtless the leader's hint will be taken by his followers, not only in "Belvidere," but throughout the Union.

It was a noble part that the military element played during the late canvass, and to it is due much of the Republican success. Not only did most of the soldiers "vote the way they shot," but they "organized victory" in the conduct of the campaign. Their mass meetings, and especially their processions, were marvellous affairs. There was, perhaps, less effervescent enthusiasm than in the "log cabin" and "hard cider" campaigns of glorious memory, and certainly no more lunging and "Harry of the West." There was no deeper exhortation of Seymour than of "Matty Van, the used-up man," and there were fewer roasted oxen eaten at barbecues, and fewer live cows and workshops on wheels being about in the procession. Let there be a wonderful prestige in the military conduct of these affairs. So many bronzed and hardy veterans, so many scarred heroes of deadly battle, so many medals and corps badges glistening along the lines, so much of the pomp and circumstance of war, that the mere sight of one of these grand processions was a living argument for the cause; and while it marched and counter-marched before the spectators, back through their memories, in an involuntary accompaniment, rolled the historic panorama of the war.

The music was the very strains under which these men had marched to actual battle; the salutes were, perhaps, those of guns from whose black lips had belched murderous flames at Shiloh or Antietam; battalions moved almost noiselessly from different points into their appointed places with a soldierly mechanism impressive by its very contrast with the confusion and delays of old-time political demonstrations; the word "Forward" resounded from men who had given it in the face of the enemy; "By torch and trumpet fast arrayed," the veterans swung into place, and then moved along the line of march with the rolling "route-step" of campaigners. Take, for a single example, the Washington demonstration, where six "regiments," under the command of Brigadier-General Albert Grant, "District Commander," formed in line. One might easily have brought to mind the illusion of actual war. The two hours' artillery salute, fired while the column was forming, was the cannonade to distract the enemy's attention, or, perhaps, to breach his position, in advance of the charging column when the brigades broke into column its corps of pioneers was at its head, companies were marching by platoons, steady and firm as marines, the officers with side-arms, the commands those of the tactics—it hardly needed the transparencies, saying "We vote as we shot," to induce the spectator to ask himself, "Is this, as they claim, the political side of the same old cause, and, if so, am I with these men or against them?"

But the great work of the troops is now done. No more significant processions; put out the torches; "Lay off the uniforms"—and "we will have peace." This is the last command of the leader in whose cause the hosts assembled, and in whose potent name they won their victory. It is a word consonant with General Grant's character, and it recalls afresh the summer of 1865. As after the Richmond and Appomattox of 1865 came peace, so after the political Richmond of 1868 "we will have peace." Lay off the emblems and accoutrements of war.

Release These Prisoners!

From the N. Y. World. Considering the proofs which have come to light since the assassination trial, it is doubtful if even Judge Bingham himself can (unless he has willfully ignored everything relating to the subject) swear that he believes Mrs. Surratt to have been guilty of the crime for which she was hung. The communication published in the World of Saturday appears to present, as a sequel to the former letter by the same correspondent, an absolutely conclusive showing, not only of Mrs. Surratt's guiltlessness of any participation in the plot for the murder of Mr. Lincoln, but of the impossibility of her having had any knowledge of it. More than this, the impossibility of Arnold, Dr. Mudd, O'Laughlin, Spangler, or John H. Surratt having foreknowledge of anything to do with the assassination seems equally evident.

Mrs. Surratt and O'Laughlin are dead. John H. Surratt, after enduring sufferings and anxieties as an exile and a prisoner which were enough to have turned his hair as white as the Prisoner of Chillon's, has been discharged from custody. But Dr. Mudd, Arnold, and Spangler are still confined at the Dry Tortugas. John H. Surratt's release, after passing through the gamut of a trial which, though conducted in a civil court, was nearly as partial and malignant as the proceedings against the executed conspirators before the military commission, is in itself a reason why his mother's memory should be acquitted and the prisoners held by the Government set at liberty. With neither Mrs. Surratt, nor Arnold, Mudd, Spangler, or O'Laughlin, was Booth half so suspiciously intimate as he was with John H. Surratt. But the sharp, stinging summing-up of the matter is that the conspiracy was not, and could not have been, ten hours old; and that the determination to assassinate Mr. Lincoln at the theatre must have been concocted after Booth learned, in the forenoon, that Mr. Lincoln was to attend the evening performance; and that Mrs. Surratt, who was absent at Surrattville, John H. Surratt, who was in near Elmhurst, N. Y., Arnold, who was at Fortress Monroe, Dr. Mudd, who was at his home several miles from Washington, and O'Laughlin, whose movements that day were accounted for by certain navy officers with whom he was engaged, were all absent from the scene of communication with Booth. Bayne, or Powell, Harold, and Atzerodt, who were really concerned, so was Spangler, who is shown to have been at or about the theatre, to which Booth did not return after he had been there and ascertained the President's intention, until night, when the performance had begun.

President Johnson, no less certainly than every other fair-minded citizen, must be deeply interested in seeing that the one reputation which can be afforded to persons so infinitely wronged is promptly made. He cannot have forgotten that, on the morning of the fatal July 18th, 1865, a young girl, Abess Surratt by name, came a suppliant to the White House and threw herself prone

upon the steps beneath its portico, and besought permission to enter and plead to him for her mother's life. He cannot forget how his enemies, who did not hesitate to bring the question of that time to light, brought the fool-hardy but terrible insinuation that he, the Vice-President, had abetted the assassin who made the President's chair his seat, and openly charged that his refusal of mercy to Mrs. Surratt and these prisoners was inspired by personal fear. Nor can he forget that his best friends regretted at the time, and have never ceased to sorrow, that his magnanimity did not at once impel him to stay the course of slaughter and injustice which swept an innocent woman off the scaffold and four innocent men into disgraceful servitude. What is there now to prevent President Johnson from instituting an inquiry into a matter so notorious as this, and vindicating this woman's memory, for her children's and the nation's sake, and giving these men their rights as citizens? For his own sake, as well, we call upon him to do justice and release these prisoners!

The Whisky War.

From the N. Y. Tribune. I. To all intelligent persons, it is palpable that the Internal Revenue is enormously defrauded, and especially with regard to distilled liquors. The impost on whisky amounts to some sixty-seven cents per gallon; the cost of making it, from grain at current prices, is about fifty cents per gallon; hence, the naked fact that whisky now sells in this market at \$1.06 to \$1.08 is conclusive. Somebody is defrauding the Revenue; and we belong to that numerous class whose interest is on the side of having the matter "righted up" and ventilated. We are not specially hostile to Mr. A. or Mr. B.; we do not pretend to know which thimble the little joker is under; but we do want the money that belongs in the Federal Treasury put there, and not retained to enable distillers to build gorgeous opera-houses, or furnish assessors and collectors with fast trotters. Being on this track, and finding the scent still warm, we do not mean to be thrown off by any art or trick whatever.

It is to do not presume that the Revenue officers here are especially unfaithful; in fact, we judge that there is more paid into the Treasury per gallon on the whole sold here than the average throughout the country. We are very willing to see it proved that all the cheating is done in the rural districts. If so, we want to learn how the stuff gets into this place, and gets sold here for less than its fair, honest cost. "Let there be light."

II. Mr. John M. Binckley, Solicitor of the Internal Revenue service, came on here some weeks since to look into this mystery. We saw him twice, and concluded that he was in deeper water than was good for him. He seemed a well-meaning man, intent on doing his duty; but fewer words and more shrewdness were absolutely requisite in his position.

IV. Mr. Binckley having returned to Washington discomfited, Judge William Fullerton was appointed in his place—we know not at whose suggestion, but we incline to give the credit to Mr. Evans. It is a credit, we think, to whomsoever may deserve it. Mr. Fullerton long held a high position at the bar of Orange county, and he has since achieved a higher at the bar of our city. When he was appointed a Justice of the Supreme Court by Governor Fenton, last year, no one lisped a doubt of his capacity or his integrity. We never heard a syllable uttered to his prejudice till he accepted this trust, and set to work to discharge its heavy responsibilities.

V. Mr. Andrew Johnson is a man of many faults, but venality is not among them. We knew him in Congress, where men are pretty accurately weighed and measured; he has since filled almost every important station, made many bitter enemies, and waged deadly war against men abler and stronger than himself; yet he has never been even charged with filling his own pockets at the public cost. What reason is there for suspecting him of an improper motive in choosing Judge Fullerton—a well-known Republican—for this work? We can imagine none.

VI. Mr. Fullerton having set to work, symptoms of agitation are soon visible. "Things is working." There are whispers that Mr. Fullerton is to be indicted for something he did, or said, or advised as counsel in respect to the compromising of a revenue suit, long before he was retained by the President. In due time, we heard (via Washington) that he had been indicted in one of our courts. Very good! If Mr. Fullerton has done or advised any wrong, let him answer for it. But how does this help our Revenue officers, or those among them whom Mr. Fullerton's investigations may implicate? We have sadly misjudged Mr. Fullerton if they make anything by this bold move, however it may fare with him.

VII. We condemn no one. We do not know who are likely to be damaged by the facts which Mr. Fullerton's investigation will develop. But we feel quite certain that investigation was needed, and that its results cannot fail to benefit the public, however they may affect individuals. We may be mistaken in Mr. Fullerton—though that does not seem probable—but we do not see how, even if he is dishonest, he can implicate those who have done no wrong. His report will not be conclusive—it merely opens up a field of inquiry, discussion, and action. So let the good work of investigation go on! If one man shall break down or be bought off, let another, and still another, succeed by his clues and his responsibilities. The abyss which has swallowed so many millions of what is rightfully public money cannot be absolutely bottomless—its darkest chasms may be irradiated. So courage and onward!

"For none ever feared that the truth should be told. Save those whom the truth would indict."

One Measure for the Bondholders and the People. From the N. Y. Herald. The bondholders and their organs never cease reiterating the plea that the Government should pay the full face of the bonds in gold, whether the obligation to do so is expressed or not, and whether the framers of the laws contemplated payment to be made in gold or currency. It is argued that the Government would be dishonest and disgrace the country if it should not pay specie in full. The foreign press, and particularly the British, makes the same argument, because there is a large amount of our bonds held abroad. By forcing specie payments, or by the Government declaring that all its bonds shall be paid in gold, the property of the bondholders would appreciate in value something like thirty per cent. These highly virtuous individuals will well claim for the full face of their bonds in specie, as their property would be increased so much in value. It is the virtue and honesty of "Shylock" over again. They will not listen to any abatement or compromise, however much the country may suffer or the burdens of the people be augmented.

Let us examine the exacting claims of the bondholders. First, then, it is well known that not more than sixty per cent. in specie, on an average, was ever paid for the bonds. A large portion was obtained for less. More than half the capital invested in them has already been returned in interest. Then nearly all the bondholders have had their other property vastly augmented in value through the accumu-

lation of gold and the effects of the war. There is scarcely a real estate owner, for example, whose property has not doubled since the war commenced. In many cases it has been appreciated more than that. In fact, the Northern capitalists and property holders have become much richer from the war, while the mass of the people have become poorer and more heavily burdened. Had they suffered as the property-holders of the South have, their demands would be less unreasonable; but they have been made rich, and ought to be satisfied, without wishing to increase their bondholding wealth thirty per cent. at the expense of the overburdened industrial classes.

As to the fine flourishes about national honor and integrity, such as Mr. Beveridge Johnson, the British press, and the bondholders' organs here indulge in, they are all bosh. No great modern nation, except the United States, has ever paid its debt in specie. Hardly any have paid it at all. Even England, with all her pretense of honesty, reduced the interest on her debt from five and six per cent. to three and three and a half. She never can hope to pay the principal, and whenever the British Government has any surplus funds to apply to the liquidation of the national debt it does not feel bound to pay a hundred for stocks nominally issued at a hundred. The National Debt Commissioners buy at the lowest rate they can, and give only from 80 to 90 for consols, according to the market. Is that dishonest? Why, then, should the heavily burdened people of this country be required to pay the full face of the bonds in gold? Why should there be depreciated national bank notes for the people and specie for the bondholders? Justice and common sense call for the same currency for both.

But this agitation of the bondholders, and their powerful allies (the national banks) for gold payments keeps the national currency depreciated. It makes it appear, in effect, that the legal-tenders, though based on the credit of the Government, are not worth what they represent to be worth. If all this clamor were to cease, and legal-tenders were accepted at their real worth, we should soon have no more trouble about specie payments; for the circulating notes of this rich Government and country are as good intrinsically as specie. All that is wanted is a uniform currency, and an established monetary system that cannot be controlled by a few speculators or a combination of bankers. The fluctuations in the money market in this city for the last week or two show the necessity of some remedy. Many of the merchants and business men were brought to the verge of bankruptcy by the selfish and grasping operations of a few individuals. With a steady and sufficient currency beyond the control of such combinations, business would be steady, and the country would go on in its natural career of prosperity.

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