

SPIRIT OF THE PRESS.

EDITORIAL OPINIONS OF THE LEADING JOURNALS UPON CURRENT TOPICS—COMPILING AND PREPARING BY THE EDITOR OF THE EVENING TELEGRAPH.

The English Elections.

The Liberals have carried the English elections. Mr. Gladstone will go into the new Parliament with a majority of 150. We presume that the first step of the party will be to declare a want of confidence in the Ministry. Mr. Disraeli will resign, and we shall have Mr. Gladstone in office shortly after Christmas. We congratulate the Liberal party of England upon this success. The triumph of the Liberal party would have been incomplete without the triumph of the Liberal party in England, under Gladstone and Bright.

The writer of the cable despatches from London makes some speculations upon the new Ministry. He fears that the Liberals will be weakened by their great strength; that there will be dissensions in the party; and that upon any test question affecting the reform of representation on the disestablishment of the Irish Church, there will be a new "Cave of Adulphus." We think the fate of the Administration of the last Parliament will prevent any session under the new Ministry. The defeat of Mr. Rowback is especially significant. This gentleman represented the uncertain wing of the Liberal party and the anti-American. He has for many years been the member from Sheffield. He is a powerful man in his way, with strong individuality, and has always appeared to be exceedingly popular with his people. His defeat is gratifying to Americans as being a rebuke on the part of Englishmen for his insolent and offensive references to the United States.

There is a story of an intrigue on the part of the old Whig families to form a conservative ministry under the premiership of the Earl of Granville. We hardly think this will be attempted. The Earl of Granville is a moderate politician, and has no claim to distinction beyond his family and his class. Connected with the families of Devonshire and of Sutherland, his house a young branch of an old Whig line, Earl Granville has been simply an active, industrious, moderate politician. He was Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs under Lord Russell, afterwards Lord Frederick of the Council, and then Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster. He has taken no prominent part in politics, and has made no impression upon England. The only class that would be gratified by his elevation to the premiership is that of those rich and ambitious Whigs who have so long been the real enemies of Reform, who pretending to be the representatives of Liberty. Earl Russell belonged to this class, while, in addition to his connections, he was a pronounced Liberal and had taken advanced ground on nearly every question of Reform. The administration of Lord Russell was unpopular. Although he had brilliant men around him, and his Cabinet contained statesmen who possessed the confidence of the British people, his career weighed upon him, and he was looked upon with distrust by the English Liberal party. His ministry fell almost from its own weakness, although it had a majority in Parliament.

We think the Liberals will make no such mistake now. What the country wants is a ministry with the representative man at its head. It selects Mr. Gladstone as the ablest and most advanced exponent of Liberal principles. It will be content with nobody else. We do not see how there can be compromise. It would jar upon the English sense of fair play to see Mr. Gladstone kept from the premiership merely to make way for a representative of an old Whig family. Something of this kind was attempted when Lord Derby resigned. The old Tories were opposed to the elevation of a "parvenu" like Disraeli to the Presidency of a Cabinet composed of dignitaries and gentlemen. But England said: "This man has fought the battle; he has been the champion of the Tory party through many a bitter contest; he has been Lord Derby's Lieutenant, and now that the leader has fallen we in-ist upon his taking command." Mr. Disraeli was made Premier of England by the English people. They prevented his sacrifice to intrigue, and they will do the same with Mr. Gladstone when the time comes to form a Liberal Ministry.

The Fortress Monroe Experiments—Our Ordnance and our Forts.

On Thursday, Friday, and Saturday of last week, a brief course of "experimental firing" was conducted at Fortress Monroe, under the direction of the United States Engineer Department, with several army officers assisting. On Saturday the "Board" closed up its labors, and as the report goes, "apparently satisfied with their labors, left for the North." Precisely what these experiments were designed to show (unless that a good many of our forts can be knocked to pieces by modern artillery, which was very well known before), it is difficult to surmise. Nor, probably, shall we ever discover. For it is somewhat noteworthy that the ordnance trials conducted from time to time at Fortress Monroe are rarely described in detail for the benefit of the people in official reports. Why is this? Is it because the engineer officers think no benefit can result from making known the progress of their experimental studies beyond their own limited circle? In England, the custom is otherwise. There, the famous Shoeburyness experiments are not only conducted in view of a large number of all sorts and classes of witnesses, civic, military, and scientific, but full official details of every part and parcel of them are promptly made out and published by the highest authorities for the benefit of Parliament and the people. In this way, both the experiments and the experimental results are placed before the people. It is only now and then, for instance, when 100 pounds of powder were at last put into the 15-inch gun, that they attract attention by their importance. Take, for example, these last experi-

mental firings. The first day's operations were against targets composed of granite and concrete, with a thin plate of iron in front. It should hardly have been difficult to prognosticate the result of practicing against such targets with the artillery there employed with full charges. Very naturally, the targets were knocked to pieces. The second and third day's practice, at least as reported, excite similar reflections. We are told that operations, on the former day, "were not resumed till nearly noon, as the Board were engaged in consultation upon the results effected the day before." The stronger targets then fired at were also composed of stone-work, brick, and concrete, with iron plates in front, strongly supported by wrought-iron pillars. Did it require experiment to believe that such guns, with full charges—or even the service artillery of other powers—would break up these structures at once, and render any guns behind them ineffectual? We are told at length of the enormous destruction effected by each shot, "smashing," "demolishing," "cratering," or "cratering" whatever it touched. We see one shot "cratering the masonry for some two or three feet in thickness entirely to pieces," and another "ploughing its way clean through the stone-work, and knocking large pieces far to the rear." Bolts are riven, embrasures broken up, targets riddled like sieves. But to what end? What was this done to prove? What was the object to be accomplished? And what is now known that was not known before? We are told that "the trial was highly satisfactory to all parties." But, how "satisfactory?" As being just what all had expected, and therefore not disagreeably disappointing any one? We may perhaps agree that no different issue of the experiments could have been looked for, and that therefore nobody was disappointed. But, in that case, what becomes of the iron veering devised for our masonry forts?

The practical value of ordnance experiments undoubtedly depends on their relation to the main point sought to be proved or disproved by them. Was the object of these firings to ascertain the power of our guns, or the strength of our forts? If the gun-party and a target-party were present, contending, as is customary, one against the other, the result could hardly have equalled the expectations of both. We have been lately told by the Chief of the Engineer Corps, that the protection of granite by iron plates should be made the subject of deliberate investigation and experiment. If this be a part of the experiment so alluded to, it can hardly be satisfactory to those who had faith in those targets, at least. As to the guns, we cannot discover that anything new has been demonstrated regarding them.

Usually the gun-men and the target-men, in experiments with national ordnance, are opposed, each in a friendly and fruitful rivalry striving to outdo the other. But in the experiments at Fortress Monroe there is no evidence of such professional competition. The gun-men never put large charges into their own guns so long as they can help it, if we may fairly judge from experiments hitherto, and that, of course, suits the target-men exactly. We write about this subject the more pleasantly and seriously (though, of course from the public, not the professional point of view) because the problem of national defense is a very grave one with all powers, and we wish to know exactly what we can rely upon. As to these experiments, as has already been intimated, we do not consider them to have established anything unexpected.

The Politicians after Grant.

The commencement of every new national administration in the United States is like the opening of a new spring. As with the balmy air, refreshing showers, and warm sunshine of April the birds begin to chirp and twitter and sing, hopping from branch to branch, ruffling their feathers and searching for material with which to build their nests, so with the advent of a new dispenser of patronage the politicians commence to make themselves heard, and put on all manner of airs in their efforts to secure comfortable quarters and plenty of food for the next four years. The first indication we had of the approaching change of weather in the political world after the frost of disappointment had nipped the hopes of the Blair family in the bud, was furnished in the noisy chattering of the Washburne breed in the West, and now the chorus is taken up and swelled by the sparrows, robins, and swallows all over the country, until it is made evident that spring has opened in earnest, and that every political bird calculates upon the enjoyment of the sunshine of the new administration, and hopes to be able to feather his own nest in fine style. The politicians are after General Grant in earnest now that the order of succession draws near; and as the whisky ring, with their plunder of one hundred million dollars a year, are just now a power among the politicians, it follows that the organs and leaders of these rings play a prominent part in the attempt to capture the new President. In this city we have four distinct divisions of these aspiring combinations—one under the management of Greeley and Company, another run by Raymond and Company, a third represented by Dana and Company, and a fourth under the leadership of Grant's special agents and instruct him how to dispense the patronage of four hundred million dollars a year for the best interest of the country and of his patriotic advisers. Greeley and Company have experienced some serious drawbacks in the misfortune of Callicott and his particular ring, in the original opposition made by them to the nomination of Grant for the Presidency, and in the breaking down of the Fenton party in the State. But they hope, with Butler in Congress and Greeley at the helm, to bully Grant into a recognition of their valuable services, and they will make a desperate effort to name the next United States Senator and to defeat Morgan, in order to impress the President-elect with a wholesome idea of their strength and influence with the Republican party in New York. Raymond and Company embrace the whisky ring of the anti-impeachers, and as they have succeeded in humbugging or frightening Andy Johnson into non-interference with the revenue frauds, and have managed to keep themselves in office during his entire term without getting into the State Prison, they believe themselves smart enough to pull the wool over Grant's eyes and to insure for themselves a new lease of power and plunder. Dana and Company represent Morgan, the Conkings, and the old Tammany bulging pool of three or four hundred thousand dollars. They seek to cut between the other two factions and to carry off the oyster while their neighbors are quarrelling over the shells. They make their point on Morgan, and trust to his advancement to the Cabinet for success and for the good, fat, substantial profits of Government offices. All these politicians are just now very busy birds, and are singing their own praises at a great rate, and endeavoring to attract Grant's attention to the brightness and beauty of their plumage. The Thurlow Weed combination, however, comes out in a more impressive manner than any of the rest, and bids fair to take the rags

off all the other bushes. The whisky ring organ at the national capital, evidently intends to make so tremendous an impression on the President elect that all efforts to supplant Weed will be in vain, and nothing will be left to General Grant but to capitulate and command Colonel Scott's coon. Thurlow Weed enters upon the scene fresh from Europe, renovated, rejuvenated, and vigorous, with a tremendous appetite and an improved digestion, ready to swallow Grant and everybody else, and to dispense the federal patronage for the next four years with that princely air attained by the experience of a lifetime as the reigning king of the lobby. We are assured that in his renewed lease of life Weed has cast his skin, as snakes are known to do, and comes out slicker and cleaner than ever. He even willing to smoke the pipe of peace with Greeley, and might be induced to consent to confer upon Fenton a small consulship or an inferior revenue office. All he wants is to be allowed to bestow upon General Grant the benefit of his large experience, sagacity, and patriotism, and to manage with his well-known business this the brokerage of four hundred million dollars a year.

Well, we have no doubt that General Grant will read the biography of Thurlow Weed with a great deal of attention and interest. We have no doubt, too, that after he has read it he will light his cigar, get into his buggy, trot off on the road at his usual gait, and turn over in his mind the question whether it will be an advantage to the country to place the administration of the Government for the next four years in the experienced hands of the great Albany lobbyist. When he has fully made up his mind on this important point, he will probably send for Thurlow Weed, John C. Coyle, and let them know his determination. We hope their patience and serenity will last them until that time arrives.

The National Dropsy.

We had supposed that with the production upon this earthly scene of the late Hon. Isaac Newton, Commissioner of Agriculture, nature had done her worst in the way of making bores. To call a person a fool was long ago decided in one of the Year-books (was it a dream, or did Mr. Evarts, in his speech at the dinner given in his honor, cite the story as from the Year-book?) not to be actionable, since a person might be none the worse for being a fool. To call a Commissioner of Agriculture, now at rest from the turmoil of his official life, a bore, can hardly be thought ill-natured or disrespectful, since Lord Macclesfield is declared by Mrs. Harriet Beecher Stowe to have assured her "that, if he were in search of a safe guardian for an orphan of good estate, he would look up the most notorious bore in the neighborhood." The moral excellencies which, according to the creed of Lord Macclesfield, must have adorned the soul of our late commissioner, may possibly have failed to shield his boresome ghost from the indignation of the greater ghost whose name he bore; for the immortal astronomer had a sharp, not to say a sharp, tongue, while in day below the earth, and *si quis porcum manducavisset*, we don't believe he can have seen with complacency his shining name bedimmed by the words without knowledge of his American namesake. But wherever the ghost of Commissioner Newton may be, and in whatever case, we desire to do him justice. He was, in truth, the saddest bore of his times; but a sadder bore than he has arisen to succeed him. That is, if the *Tribune* may be believed.

For the *Tribune* gives us what purports to be a synopsis of the forthcoming "Annual Report" of Mr. Commissioner of Agriculture Capron, and in this synopsis any way indicates the real character of the said "Annual Report," it must certainly as far transcend the most tedious efforts of the late and, intellectually speaking, unlearned Newton, as the heavens are high above the earth, and the Apollo Belvidere more beautiful than the martyred Lincoln.

Capron, the *Tribune* assures us, capers through a "full volume of twelve hundred pages," with "thirty-seven full-page illustrations," in this simple tone he has found room not only for his own report, "and for reports of the heads of bureaus," but also for about "twenty-five papers on different subjects from the pens of writers who dwell in various sections of the country." It is really appalling to think of the "vast and various misinformation" which Capron has, in all human probability, thus contrived to put together for the further adding of Congressional pates, which certainly needed no such perturbation. One of Capron's contributors, we are informed, has been good enough to write a treatise "On rammie, or Chinese grass, containing a history of experimental results in the British Colonies resulting from their use of this country, and an account of the efforts that have been made by the Agricultural Department in the same direction." The italics here are our own, and we shall be grateful to anybody who will tell us how the "history of experimental results" concerns agriculture, or in what way the "British colonies result from jealousy of this country," or, in fact, anything at all about the matter. Another friend of Capron enlightens us about a singular agricultural product described as "the goatantelope of the Rocky Mountains," but this may be a misprint for "cantalope," and may promise us a new variety of that delectable melon. A third shows farmers how "to manufacture goat-fleece for commercial purposes," information which we might have supposed could with more propriety be addressed to wool-splinters. "George Husman, of Missouri, has a long paper on wine and wine-making; and Edward A. Samuels, of Boston, one on the value of birds to farms;" which latter article we devoutly hope may prove to be a prose translation of Mr. Longfellow's poem on the same subject. "Mrs. Ellen S. Tupper, of Iowa, an enthusiastic worker with honey-bees, has an article on bee-keeping in winter." "One of the department officers has a very readable article on industrial colleges," and other articles treat of Southern agriculture, rice culture, Southern fruits, orange and citron culture, and similar topics not heretofore common in such reports," while "still other articles relate to irrigation by a citizen of Arizona, liquid manure from New York, farmers' clubs from Wisconsin, model farm-buildings, Pennsylvania butter," etc. etc.

Arizona is a desperately dry land, so dry that every General Halleck thought it dry, which is a frightful thing to say of it; and if Arizona can be "irrigated," even "by a citizen," it is matter of thankfulness. But is it not horrible that Capron, not content with employing five or six hundred pages of himself upon us, should call together a coveyn of all his friends and acquaintances and empty them also upon us? According to this synopsis of his work, Capron has constituted himself the editor of a monstrous annual magazine, which the country is to pay for getting up and publishing, without the remotest chance of ever getting back so much as a sixpence for it in the way of sales or of subscriptions. Christopher North used to say that every unpaid contributor was, by the force of the term, an ass. Whatever other points of resemblance there may be between that useful beast of burden and Commissioner Capron's contributors, we may be perfectly

certain that they are not "unpaid." Nor, we may be sure, does Capron pay them. These twenty-five papers on "different subjects, from the pens of writers who dwell in different parts of the country," will be paid for out of the National Treasury. Capron and Capron's "heads of bureaus" will be paid for out of the National Treasury. Some Radical cry of Capron's in Congress, who for his own part would rather be burnt at the stake than read through Capron's twelve hundred pages, will get up and move the House that five or ten or fifteen or twenty thousand copies of "Capron's Report" be struck off, to be paid for out of the National Treasury. Whereby we perceive that Capron is not only a bore, but worse. He is an unnatural, morbid, monstrous bore. For he is a thief; immoral as well as intolerable; an imposition as well as an infliction. If the papers which he publishes at the national expense are worth publishing, the country is full of agricultural papers and magazines wherein, after being honestly paid for, they can be properly published, properly circulated, honestly bought, and read by those who have reasons for reading them. We shall next have the Secretary of War paying for lectures on the Krupp gun, and publishing translations of Jouin's "Art of War" in his annual report, and the Indian Commissioner issuing an elaborate edition of Cooper's "Last of the Mohicans" or Campbell's "Gertrude of Wyoming."

But the whole thing is of one piece. Capron is the direct outcome of the whole radical theory and practice of government. Radicalism is essentially hydrocephalic. It is a drop of the nation's head, water on the brain of the State. It swamps the Government with superfluous offices, and sucks the people's blood in taxes to maintain them. Capron and Capron's departmental bore are but incidents and illustrations of the nation's sore disease.

Cabinet Officers.

It is pleasing to learn that the volunteer patriots who continue to shower advice upon General Grant by the mail-bag full, have found two eminently conservative citizens worthy of his selection for Cabinet trusts. With a view to the capture of the Democracy, it is suggested that their two companions and trusted leaders, Horatio Seymour and Robert E. Lee, should be called to the head of departments. General Grant is assured that, if he will only do this, he can have the enthusiastic support of the party that didn't elect him. We venture to suggest that a cheaper bargain can be driven. Lee's appointment alone will be enough to draw over the whole lot.

Spot Them.

It is said that certain professed Democrats in Indiana are becoming "soft" on Grant, as they have been on Andy Johnson. Between Johnson and the "whisky ring" they have not known where they belonged, and whom they served. They are the same parties who sold out the Democracy of the West at the Democratic National Convention here last July. Now they are ready to affiliate with the moderate Jacobins, if they can retain Federal office by it. Let them be followed up and opposed.

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