

SPIRIT OF THE PRESS.

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

Say You So?

From "Brick" Pomeroy's N. Y. Democrat.

The Jacobin press, forgetful of the past, is continually blundering into positions in direct contradiction to those formerly occupied by the party which it represents, and in pointed condemnation of the course lately pursued by its leaders.

The *Sun*, referring to the delay of nearly four years in bringing Jefferson Davis to trial, and the farce of calling up his case, and having counsel in attendance term after term, says:

"It was, therefore, fully determined not to hang J. H. Davis. Why not at once have said so, and assigned the reasons? If they were good, solid, and sufficient reasons, such as ought to have influenced the Government, it would be well to communicate them to the people, if such and fully stated; or else the people are not capable of self-government. The men in authority at Washington appear to have thought it necessary to treat the rebels as incompetent, and to give the great reason of self-interest control over the determination of this matter. Otherwise it might as well have been announced in the beginning that Jefferson Davis was not to be hanged; and that point having been denied, it was quite necessary to try him, or to pretend that he was going to be tried."

These remarks are doubtless very just, and the reasons assigned should have influenced the disposal of the case long since. But it is not surprising, considering the hands that the Government is in, that the cause of the *Sun's* criticism exists. It must be remembered that the *Sun's* own party is in power. The administration at Washington is composed of the *Sun's* own friends. It is the legacy which Mr. Lincoln left to curse the country after his untimely taking off. Johnson is the man who was elected on the ticket with him—selected as the candidate because up to that time the most ferocious and vindictive Jacobin of them all—the spoons thief of Massachusetts having been the only one who could rival him in these qualities, and whose claims to a nomination were seriously considered in opposition to those of Johnson, in making the selection. Then at the head of the State Department is Seward, the Mephistopheles of Lincoln's administration as well as of Johnson's. In the Cabinet are Welles, McClellan, and Randall, all appointees of Lincoln; and Johnson, Seward, and all of them following in his footsteps, and faithful to his record.

It admits of no successful dispute that the present administration is but a continuation and imitation of that which preceded it. Johnson has carried out Lincoln's views, and his policy would have been acquiesced in by the whole party, had he not shown an ambition to overtop other chiefs of the party who looked to the succession, and excited their alarm, envy, and rivalry. This led to the split between them, and made the division so wide and the opposition so bitter. It was because they were induced, on either side, by no public considerations, but solely by personal ambition.

This led to the two rival schemes of reconstruction, both equally unconstitutional, usurpatory, and flagitious. For this reason we have opposed the present administration as strenuously as we did that which preceded it. The latter has had no Democratic quality more than the former. The whole quarrel between Johnson and the Rump originated in mutual jealousy, and has been prosecuted to gain power and spoils. How could Democrats take sides in such a quarrel, or take any further interest in it than to wish that the parties to it would destroy each other? It is a case like that which is likely to arise early in Grant's administration; in which event we should pursue the same course towards it that we have in reference to the disgraceful squabble between Johnson and the Rump.

In this very quality of the present Administration with which the *Sun* fuds so much fault, it is imitating that by which Lincoln's was pre-eminently distinguished at the time that the chief editor and proprietor of the *Sun* was connected with it in a secondary capacity. The war was got up by false pretences, and was prosecuted for more than two years after its commencement by tricks, subterfuges, and deceptions, which would have done credit to the skill, as it brought into play more than the rascality, of the most expert operator in any confidence game ever yet invented.

The collision at Fort Sumter was brought about by the most disreputable falsehood and chicanery ever practised by men in public position. This was designed to inaugurate the war under auspices favorable to the abolition party, by making the South the apparent aggressor, and was successful. But this was not the ending but only the beginning of deception. This got up the flag mania. Then, to rouse the people to arms, the cry went forth that the capital was in danger, and they were called upon to march and save the capital. The last and the standing declaration for two years before raising the black flag of abolition, which, until the autumn of 1863, was partially concealed under the stars and stripes, was that the war was prosecuted to restore the Union, when the Union would never have been endangered but for threatened abolition, and might at any time have been restored without the further effusion of blood, had all designs of abolition been abandoned and discontinued.

But no. This was the meaning and origin of the party—artfully concealed for a time—but finally disclosed when it was thought the people had become sufficiently exasperated to bear it. Lincoln and his advisers knew that at the outset of the war it would not answer to show the cloven foot. Hence they concealed its hideous deformity under a drapery of stars and stripes. But they were all the time carefully and assiduously working up public opinion "to the sticking point," and when this was reached, out stepped the abolition demon, and he has run riot ever since.

Here was practised, upon a much larger and far more criminal scale, a game which the *Sun* is charging upon the present Administration. And now, with wonderful simplicity, it says that if this kind of deception is necessary, the people are not capable of self-government. We think they have demonstrated this most effectually in the history of the last ten years. If they do not speedily come to their senses, they are fit only to be handed over to a monarchy. Certainly the accident of birth could not do worse for us than the people have done in electing Lincoln, Johnson, and Grant, and it might do much better.

The Franking Abuse.

From the N. Y. Tribune.

We hope Congress will make haste, if not to abolish the franking privilege altogether, at least to guard against its abuse. The franking system has now reached such proportions that members of Congress have no longer time to write their names upon the multitude of documents which they send free through the mail, but use a stamp instead. The franking privilege was designed to cover the official correspondence of Congressmen with officers of the Government and with their constituents; but it has swollen to probably ten times its legitimate dimensions, and has turned the Post Office of Congress into a perfect curiosity.

shop. There is a legend of a Congressman from the far Southwest, in the days before the war, who used to frank his soiled linen home to be washed. We know that Mr. Brook disseminates circulars advertising the New York *Express* by means of his printed frank, and Mr. Dennis Barnes sends out price-lists of his "Mustang Liniments" and "Soothing Syrups." Congressman O'Neill of Pennsylvania has recently been found franking all over the country a good thick pamphlet published by the Union League of Philadelphia, and labelling it, by a pleasing freedom of language, a "Pub. Doc." We dare say the book contained a great deal more useful information than nine out of ten documents issued from the Government Printing Office; but it was not a public document for all that, and if Mr. O'Neill wanted to send copies of it through the mail he ought to have paid the postage, as any private gentleman would. During the last election canvass, it was common for Congressmen who were candidates for re-election to frank ballots and addresses all through their districts; and we know of at least one case in which, by some process of leg-remain which we do not profess to understand, the printed frank of a candidate was used to cover the ballots of his opponent. It is not easy to see how the privilege can be confined strictly within its legitimate limits, if there is anything legitimate about it; but if Congress will not abolish it altogether, it might at least forbid the use of printed franks, and the application of written ones to any but official letters and documents.

Mr. Lynch's Resumption Bill.

From the N. Y. Tribune.

Representative John Lynch of Maine proposes two measures designed to effect a return to specie payments, upon which we are asked to express our views.

The first consists of an act entitled "To provide against undue expansions and contractions of the currency, and to propose to issue \$300,000,000 of new coupon bonds, payable quarterly, and subject to State, municipal, and local taxation, issuable for par in currency, reusable by the Secretary of the Treasury at any time within ten years if received by him, and to be redeemed at the end of twenty years in coin. This provides for a loan which, being payable principal and interest in currency, and subject to local taxation, we judge would be worth, while Five-tenths are at 75, say 50 cents on the dollar in gold. No possible relation exists between the provisions of this act and the functions ascribed to it in its title, viz., "to provide against expansions and contractions of the currency." Congress might pass this act, and on the very next day another for any amount of additional currency. It might with equal propriety have been entitled "An act to Prevent the tides from rising on Sunday."

The second measure is entitled "A bill to provide for the gradual resumption of specie payments." It provides that after a given date, say May 1, 1869, the Government shall destroy all United States notes "when received in the course of ordinary transactions," i.e., for revenue, sales of lands, settlements of accounts, etc., and in lieu thereof issue new United States notes of like denominations to those destroyed, payable after one year, in coin, on demand; all National Bank Notes received by the Treasury shall be redeemed by their banks in "greenbacks," and the latter destroyed in like manner. As no provision is made for selling these notes, it is assumed that they are to be paid out in the ordinary expenses of the Government for salaries, contracts, the war and navy service, etc. Mr. Lynch estimates that, as the Treasury receives and pays out in current expenses say \$150,000,000 a year, or at the rate of \$15,000,000 per month, his plan would cause this entire sum in one year to be changed from greenbacks into notes payable in one year in coin. These new notes would be paid out at the rate of \$15,000,000 a month during the first year, and would fall due at the same rate during the second year of the working of the plan.

We do not wish to discourage any feature of value in this bill, but we suggest the following queries:

I. Would not the payment of the members of Congress, officers, contractors, clerks, soldiers, sailors, and other beneficiaries of the Government, in notes due in coin in one year, while the producers and tax-payers are still using the old National Bank note and greenback currency, amount to an immediate addition of about twenty per cent. to the pay of all Federal officers? and would not the new notes to be issued under this act bear a premium of about twenty per cent. over the remaining currency of the country?

II. So long as they bear a premium, would they not, like gold, be hoarded for payment in gold? and would not so great a reduction in the volume of the currency as the abstraction of \$150,000,000 a year by the Government, without any outflow of currency having the same value as the National Bank notes, the old legal tenders, and the general "money of account" in use in business, occasion such a stringency of the money market as would compel the abandonment of the plan?

III. Would the people submit to, or be benefited by, a plan which adds twenty per cent. gold value to the expense of the Government and the salaries of its officers, while it tightens the money market with tremendous force on the merchants, manufacturers, and business community?

IV. Would not the new notes be a fancy stock for politicians instead of a currency for the people?

V. Would it be feasible to require the national banks or the people to redeem their debts in these new notes, when there is no provision by which they may get them, unless they are employed by the Government?

VI. Can specific payments be resumed by any measures which do not enable the people and the banks to resume?

There may be points in Mr. Lynch's plan which, in combination with others of which it makes no mention, would do well enough. But it is very incomplete, and of itself would not work well.

Party Rule in England.

From the N. Y. Times.

What would be said and thought of General Grant if he should offer Senator Doolittle a place in his Cabinet? Can any man imagine the curse, both loud and deep, that would be poured out upon him? The services he has rendered the country would be forgotten. The faith the people now have in his honesty and good sense would disappear. He would be instantly branded as a traitor to the party (which is the highest offense known to our political code), and as false to his principles and to the men who have put him in power.

Yet this is almost exactly what the Liberal party in England has done in forming the new Cabinet. Mr. Gladstone as its leader, and as the actual Executive of the British Government, offers the place of Chancellor of the Exchequer to Robert Lowe, formerly a Liberal, but who turned against the party on the Reform bill two years ago, who assailed that measure with greater vigor, ability, and rancor than Mr. Doolittle has ever shown in attacking reconstruction, and who, from that day to this, has been "outside the party," though he has not acted so openly with its opponents as Mr. Doolittle has with the Democrats. Yet

Mr. Gladstone appreciates so highly his talents and the influence which they give him—and would as much rather have him for a friend than a foe—that he tendered him the very best position in the Cabinet under his incoming administration.

This will probably be regarded as proof of the slight progress England has actually made in the science of party government, in spite of the Reform bill, as compared with the United States. That the party which is successful in the election, and which thus has absolute control of all the patronage and power of the Government, should actually give a high position to a man who refused to go with it on a cardinal measure of party policy, shows how little that party knows of the cardinal maxims of party rule or the real secrets of party strength.

If such things are to be done with impunity, what becomes of the well-known principle—adopted now by all parties in this country—that "to the victors belong the spoils"? How can a party be expected to main sin itself if it is to be thus cut off from the full breasts of Government patronage? What encouragement have politicians to work for a party victory if they see so large a slice of its rewards easily handed over to a renegade—to one who deserts the party because he cannot endorse its acts? What right has any party to a judgment or a conscience of his own? What business has he to "set up for himself"—to act upon his own convictions of duty, instead of following in the train of his party—content to obey its behests and to ask no questions?

Mr. Gladstone comes into power with an immense majority—quite as large in proportion as General Grant will have, and almost as large as the Republicans had two years ago. It is not likely that Mr. Lowe could damage his ascendancy in any way, if he were left out in the cold," as, on all grounds of party discipline, he ought to be—not will he be.

But Mr. Gladstone is evidently under the impression that the strength of a party does not consist wholly in the number of its votes—that talent, debating power, sagacity, and high personal character still count for something even to a party which is largely in the ascendant. We have got over all such obsolete ideas in this country. When a party has a large majority of votes—it can do anything it likes—it needs nobody's support, and scorns to look outside its own party lines for help. All it has to do is to feed its own followers well, and see to it that not even the smallest "nubbin" of patronage falls to anybody who is outside the party fold.

In this country party is the ruling power. The Government is nothing but the party. Whatever aids the party, aids the Government; and whatever don't, don't. The only proper and legitimate mode of aiding the Government, therefore, is to aid the party. Whatever does that is all right; whatever don't do that is all wrong. This fundamental principle of popular government evidently has not yet penetrated the stolid British mind. Parties in England, especially, think it worth while to conciliate and compel the confidence and support of their opponents as well as of their staunch supporters. The general sentiment of the whole country seems to them worth something, and they try to get it on their side.

They will get over this in due time. They will presently find out that it is quite useless to pay the slightest attention of any sort to anybody or any class but those who have been their stanch and consistent friends. And as to asking anybody else to aid in carrying on the Government, and giving them the smallest crumb or morsel of Government patronage, the day will soon come in England, as it has already come here, when the caitiff who shall hint at such a thing will be deemed too base and unprincipled to come in contact in any way with the leaders and guides of political affairs. We have no doubt Mr. Gladstone will be thoroughly bastinadoed by the "earnest men" of his own party for the indifference to its faith and its interests shown in inviting Mr. Lowe to a seat in the new Cabinet.

Five Reconstructed States.

From the N. Y. World.

The chief points in General Meade's report are that the pretended Constitution of Alabama was fairly defeated, "and that the rejection was based on the merits of the Constitution itself;" that the pretended Constitution of Florida is his handiwork; that he don't like the pretended Governor of Georgia; that not enough test-oath men in his posse can be found to fill the offices; that the first thing the bogus Governor did was to call on him for troops, and that they have been called ever since; and, finally, that he wants more power.

I take this occasion to call the attention of the General Assembly, and through him to the having the power to call to account the condition of affairs existing in this department, and the necessity, if it be deemed proper for the military to intervene in civil affairs, that more power be given to the department commander than existing laws confer.

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