## SPIRIT OF THE PRESS.

EDITORIAL OPINIONS OF THE LEADING JOURNALS DPON CURRENT TOPICS-COMPILED EVERY DAY FOR THE EVENING TELEGRAPH.

The Tenure of Office Act.

General Butler's friends are aunouncing with much zeal that he is about to press his bill for the repeal of the Tenure-of-Office act through the House as soon as Congress meets again, with the view, the Springfield Republi-can suggests, of establishing a thoroughly cordial understanding with General Grant before the distribution of offices begins under the new administration. Those who paid attention to the canvass in the Fifth Massachusetts district will remember that the only charge or threat or prediction from his opponents which seemed to throw him off his guard, was a hint-we forget from what quarter-that, even if elected, Grant would pay no attention to his wishes in the appointments to office.

This seemed to exasperate him a good deal, and caused him to forget for a moment the role of admirer of Grant in which he was then figuring, and to exclaim that it Grant attempted anything of the kind, he (Batler) would give him plenty to do, or words to that effect—meaning that Grant would find in him what is popularly called "a troublesome cus-The inference the Republican therefore draws is, that the new bill is due to General Butler's fear that Grant may possibly cherish sinister designs with regard to the Butler share of the spoils, and the latter therefore wishes to avoid an open row by establishing, before the division begins, a claim on the new President's gratitude.

As a piece of speculative inquiry, there is much in this examination of General Butler's motives to command our respect, but we doubt the utility of examining his motives for acts in themselves good. He does so many things in themselves, bad that the analysis of his mental and moral constitution may safely be reserved for occasions on which these come under discussion. For ourselves, we are quite willing to take any active support he gives to useful legislation-and until now he can hardly be said to have given any whatever-at its full value, and to be only too thankful that he is not in mischief. If his zeal about the repeal of the Tenure-of-Office act were only sufficient to prevent his damaging the public credit by writing letters about taxing the bonds-a kind of work in which he has been vigorously engaged during the last week or two-it would delight us, even if the measure were not in itself as useful as we believe it

It is not difficult to defend the Tenure of-Office act, even if its results have not proved as valuable as was expected, or even if it be now proved worthless or mischievous as a permanent arrangement. In the earlier days of Mr. Johnson's quarrel with Congress, in 1866, the most prominent of his hallucinations undoubtedly was his belief that he was going to be the founder of a new party, which was to back him up in excluding Congress from all share in the work of reconstruction, and he and his friends made no secret of his intention to use, or rather abuse, the appointing power in aid of this scheme. With the enormous amount of patronage which has been at the disposal of the President since the outbresk of the war, it was easy to see that even if he could not make it available for the defeat of Congress at the elections, he could use it so as to create a false impression everywhere, and especially at the South, of his real strength, and the success or failure of reconstruction depended largely on the Southern comprehension of the real state of feeling at the North, and of the exact extent of the President's power. Even, therefore, if Congress was not shocked by the spectacle of the conversion of the civil servants of the Government into electioneering tools-which it certainly was not, for no spectacle was more familiar-and even if it had been fully aware, as most members, we feel sure, were, that no such restriction of the President's powers and responsibilities could be justified as a permanent enactment-its depriving Mr. Johnson of the authority to dismiss, with a view simply to the existing emergency, was as natural and proper as any other step in the reconstruction process.

He and his friends would doubtless have held strong ground, if he had been able, in defending his authority against Congressional encroachment, to appear as the champion of reform, or as the advocate of the withdrawal of the civil service from the arena of party politics altogether. But he was not able to do anything of the kind. He could not pretend that the appointments or dismissals made by him without Congressional interference would be or were any better than those in which Congress meddled, or that the nation would lose anything as regarded the purity and efficiency of the administration by having his responsibility lessened.

The act undoubtedly had the effect of disabusing the President and his supporters of the idea that he was either a formidable political enemy or a valuable political friend, and of putting an end to all hope in any quarter of his being able to impede seriously the work of reconstruction. But here its usefulness ended. In so far as it helped to precipitate impeachment it was a calamity. It has done nothing to improve the public service. The President, if he had had full swing, could not have made it worse than it is at this moment. The Senate, if it had had none of the power of interference the act has given it, could not have done less for reform than it has done since the act was passed.

In fact, whatever change has occurred in the administrative system since the act was passed has been for the worse and not for the better, and the difficulty of reform has been increased because it is more difficult than ever to fix the responsibility of abuses. To whom we owe the swarm of rascals who figure in the dissolving views offered to the public by the various "rings," nobody can tell. Mr. Johnson says it is the Senate, and the Senate says it is Mr. Johnson. All the public can tell is that both are concerned in it. But one thing is certain, and that is, that the repeal, "pure and simple," of the "Tenure-of Office act will, as a measure of reform, prove illusory unless accompanied by the passage of the Civil Service bill; and if General Butler wants to assoclate his name with something aseful, let him rally to the support of this also. It would be difficult for us, without seeming extravagant, to express all the confilence we feel in General Grant's character and ability, but he would have to be more than mortal if he could make head against the corruption which now prevails in Washington without the aid of a

radical change in the system. The mere restoration of the authority the President enjoyed before the passage of the Tenure of Office act, though a step in the right direction, would enable him to accomp'ish little or nothing. The various "rings" have during the last three or four years gained such enormous strength that unless the President's legal authority—that is, legal power of exercising his discretion-is surrounded by stronger barriers than his personal character, however good or wise or able the boudoirs of Belgravia the feeling and the he may be, can supply, he must, sooner or force which should be directed to the demoti-

later, succumb or be outwitted. The matter | tion of the British Constitution and the hu- | stitution of slavery, both religious and politiis all the more important because, with Grant in the Presidential chair untrammelled by pledges, and with a great reputation and un-questioned claims on the national gratitude at his back, a chance of choosing between the upward and the downward road in the conduct of the Government is offered us which may not come again in the lifetime of any of those who elected him, or come at all till reform would have to be purchased by great structural changes in the Government.

Every Man a Politician. From the N. Y. Times.

A friend who was present at the dinner to General Grant by one of our millionaires, told us there was four of the twenty who would take office. We were obliged to differ with him. We believe there were five. At least one-quarter of our voting population, we take it, are ready to hold office, nay, anxious to

do so. It is a curious and not very intelligible fact.

Our Central Government, it is said, employs and pays 60,000 office-holders. They are liable to be supplanted to please some whim are sure to be supplanted whenever there is a change of President. Sixty thousand in office implies one million out of office who are moving heaven and earth to get in. The whole of these we may put down as professed politicians-men who are auxious to make politics their business. It seems that a man who has once held an office forever wants to hold an office. He cannot be cured by any known means. A million capable men at this moment among our people are passing a wretched and scheming winter in the vague hope that they may get an office next spring from General

It is the most hopeless form of insanity one would think, for it is apparent from the figures of the Blue Book that there are not five hundred offices in the whole country which will pay a man a decent support. The pay of the Secretary of the Treasury is about one-half that of a good bank president; that that of a member of Congress is one-half that of a good country lawyer; while the smaller departmental offices are notoriously insufficient to support a family. It appears by recent developments that men do want the place of Internal Revenue Commissioner—salary \$6000 who are at this time in receipt of salaries of \$10,000 to \$13,000—and this, too, in face of the fact that it cannot be held over four years, and may be snatched away at any

The explanation of this astounding condition of things is found by some in the theory that men are venal. It is and has been urged that men seek for offices not for the salaries, but for the plunder. To a certain extent this is doubtless true, but we are loth to believe it to its full extent. But it is not to be doubted that our system is as bad as it can be and is the worst ever invented. When the phrase, "to the victors belong the spoils" was applied, it was the most devilish text ever preached from: we have been preaching and practising it now these three decades. Men who get offices know that their official life is short, and if they can be tempted to make the most of their short time, they will be. "Make hay while the sun shines" is a maxim quite as generally accepted and acted upon by the

politician as the farmer. What is true of the Central Government we may assume to be true of the lesser governments. We conclude that there are 25,000 to 30,000 men in this city who hold places, or expect to, in the city government. We know of men who go into school boards and every other small place, who can have no purpose but the hope of pickings. We know of men who give up \$5 a day to go to the Legislature to get 33—and for what? And those who are not directly venal are sustained by the hope that "something will turn up" by which they

shall benefit. The truth is, that this system is corrupting the body politic. We read politics and talk politics and smoke politics and drink politics the year round. There seems to be something fascinating to mertal man to be put up and pushed forward by a great party. He finds himself talked about, courted and treated by everybody as if he were a great man; and this, to most men, is the same as if he were. He arrives at a dignity which he has hardly dared to dream of, and thus we are being converted into a nation of politicians; and that means ruin. The politician must exist, and he is, or ought to be, a most valuable man; but he ought to allow his fellow-men to seek him, rather than he to hunt his fellow-men.

But as a business it is poor, and the pay is small. Venal or not, hardly any man can keep money if he makes it in that way. There are a thousand demands upon him, and it takes a sharp brain and a ready purse under our system for a man to keep bis place against the million who are trying to get it away from

Twain, Greeley, and Train. From the N. Y. World.

Mr. Mark Twain, of California, emulous, and justly emulous, of the diplomatic successes of Mr. Ross Browne, yearns to be sent as american Minister to England. He accordingly appeals to all that is noblest in the nature of Horace Greeley, and entreats that eminent citizen to release General Grant from the promise which ("we have heard and believe") was made by him, over a breakfasttable at Delmonico's, to bestow upon H. G. the honors now enjoyed by Mr. Reverdy John son. Mr. Twain may as well understand at once that his cake is all dough, or, if he likes that better, that his :'goose is cooked." He is a very amusing and, we dare say, a very goodlooking person, but he cannot come in as Envoy to England. If (which is very improbable) H. G. could be induced to abandon his own claims to that exalted post, he would be constrained by all possible considerations of consistency and of policy to exert his whole influence in behalf of Mr. Geo. Francis Train.

The columns of the Tribune bear witness to the fact that the first duty of an American Minister to England, in the opinion of Horace Greeley, is to bully the British Government, and his second duty, like unto it, to snub all British Tories, shipbuilders, and sympathizers with rebellion. These are his Puffendorf, these his Vattel. And, unless Mr. Twain is a more conceited person than we take him to be, he will hardly deny that in these particulars no man now living in America can be expected to rival the indomitable and incorruptible Train. H. G. himself is a pliant and facile tool in comparison with the Eagle of Omaha. H. G. has been known to consent to sinners when they enticed him. He went to Niagara Falls to hobnob with George Sanders, and to Richmond to bail out Jefferson Davis. What guarantee can we have that he would not accept a "mount" from the Dake of Beaufort or some other sporting enemy of the Union, and go careering, in a red coat, across country after the hounds with a meet of most conservative peers and Church-and-State squires? He is fond, too, of all sorts of worldly amusements, and we may depend upon it that before he had been in England a month. Lady Beaconsfield and her wily spouse would have him dancing at Willis' Rooms with wicked little Tory countesses, and fribbling away in

miliation of a bloated aristocracy.

Now, nothing of this need be feared with George Francis Train. The blandishments of beauty and the fascinations of the flesh would be thrown away upon that most patriotic and most pachydermatous of men. His passive courage has been proved and found not wanting during months of incarceration in a British bastile. What could the cajoleries of a British palace effect upon his just and tenacious nature? He has looked the whole world in the face through the bars of his daugeon, and foared not to call a spade a spade nor a Briton a brute, though the red-cress of St. George waved over his head and the red-coats of Vioteria kept watch and ward about him. His last act on leaving the Old World was to hurl defiance at Windsor Castle and demand the independence of Ireland. His first act on reaching the New World was to declare war against Great Britain while yet his foot pressed the deck of a British steamer and the thralls of the tyrant glared in anger and in amazement all about him. Would such a man be likely to call Mr. Roebuck "his friend," or to shake hands with Alabama Laird, or to soothe the feelings of Lord Clarendon, or to placate a venal Parliament? "Not much!"

The Tribune will be false to all its professions if it fail to urge the appointment of such a man to the work which it has so elaborately laid out for an American envoy in Esgland to do. Mr. Twain must go to the Court of St. James. And Mr. Train must console himself with the thought that all the "swells" of the British capital, with whom it is an article of faith always to pronounce the letter R like the letter w, we will surely turn Train into Twain, and so give him all the glory with none of the trouble of the post which he solicits. The only real difficulty in settling the matter is likely to come from Mr. Train himself. Mr. Train's abhorrence of British tyranny, James McHenry, and the Old Testament is only equalled by his hatred of spirits and of tobacco. It may, therefore, be a little doubtful whether he will consent to accept office from the new administration excepting on the condition that Wendell Phillips shall be appointed Comptroller of the White douse, with absolute authority over the domestic life of its inmates. But this should be easy of arrangement. There would seem to be no good reason why Congress should not apply the principles of its recent legislation to families as well as to States; and the radicals who rule us ought surely to be able to find in the Constitution as clear a warrant for regulating the personal habits of one President as they have found there for overriding the political prerogatives of another.

Reverdy's Mistakes.

From the N. Y Tribune. Mr. Reverdy Johnson, in his letter to Laird, recchoss Laird's assertion that tault is found with our Minister by captious Yankees because he sympathized with the South in our late struggle. This was a gross misstatement when originally uttered by Laird, and becomes something worse when uttered by Johnson. They are both professing to state the views of their autagonists, and are morally bound to state them fairly and honestly. Let us briefly set them straight:-

Mr. Laird's sympathies may concern him deeply, but do not at all concern the American people. We do not inquire into them, because we care nothing about them.

Thousands of his fellow Tories sympathized warmly with our slaveholding Rebels; yet we neither remonstrated nor took offense. They were grandsons of men who surrendered with Burgoyne at Saratoga, or with Cornwallis at Yorktown, or the sons of gallant fellows who recoiled from the deadly fire of Jackson's lines at New Orleans. The younger brood thought they had at last a chance to "get even" with us, so they shouted and cheered or the Southern Confederacy like good honest Tories, as they are. It was human nature to do so; and we don't bear them a shadow of ill-will for it. Under like circumstances, we might have done much the same.

Mr. Laird's case is entirely different. He was a member of Parliament. Parliament is the most influential part of the British Government. That Government, while recognizing the Rebels as a belligerent power, enjoined on its subjects the strictest neutrality in our contest. Mr. Laird conspicuously, paraistently violated that neutrality. He made war upon us, in defiance of the Queen's Proclamation. He waged a mean, cowardly, vandal war upon us, by building and equipping swift and strong war steamers—swift enough to overtake our harmless merchantmen and run away from our national cruisers, sent out to protect our commerce. Those steamers, built and fitted out by Laird, traversed every sea and looked in at every port, cheered and feted where Torylsm, whether of the Old World or the New, had a votary, and lighting up the skies with the flames of our unarmed vessels, bound on voyages of peace and good-will to all. The injury done us by Laird's pirates in that hour of our national agony and peril was far be-yond the value of the vessels and cargoes de-stroyed by his British-built, British-armed, British-manned corsairs. Not what we lost, but when we lost it, and its inevitable effect in driving our commerce from the seas or under foreign flags, is the vital consideration. Mr. R. Johnson was sent to England to de-

mand reparation for the cruel wrong done us by Laird & Co., so far as reparation can now be made. He was sent to make Great Britain realize that Laird's war upon us was as lawless as it was cowardly-that it was a wrong which we could not overlook without evincing a craven, cowardly spirit-that it was one to which we had already too long submitted, and to which we would tamely submit no

longer. Can any one doubt that our Ambassador's hobnobbing and fraternizing with Laird, while our claims were still under discussian, was calculated to weaken, to damage our case How could the Brttish public believe us aggrieved and in earnest in demanding redress for the ravages of Laird's corsairs while our Minister is feasting and frolicking with Laird himself? Is not such fraternization plainly saying to John Bull, "You see that we must make a show of demanding redress for those ship-burnings, but we don't really mean it,

and shall make the thing as easy as possible." Mr. Laird, we are assured by our Minister, now that the war is over, sincerely wishes a lasting peace between the two countries. We rather think he does. But suppose we should to morrow be in such a fix as we were just after Bull Run, what would then be Mr. Laird's feelings and wishes? Would a new treaty of peace and friendship with his Government bind him more than the old one did? If Mr. Jennson imagines that he was sent to England to make peace with Mr. Laird, he is gravely

Emigration Southward.

From "Brick" Pomeroy's N. Y. Democrat. Not the least among the results of the late civil war is the increased knowledge of the resources and natural advantages of soil, climate, and productions of the South. While slavery existed, an almost unaccountable amount of ignorance on this subject prevailed among the mass of the people living at the North, coupled with an equal amount of preindice, growing out of the systematic misrepresentation made by the opponents of the in-

cal. For many years this orusade against slavery had the effect of keeping out of its limits nearly all of the surplus population of the North, as well as that of Europe, who sought our shores, and who were imbued with a feeling of repugnance to that section of the country mainly on account of the "institution." Added to this, the idea prevailed extensively that the successful cultivation of the products of the South could only be accomplished by negro labor-cotton, sugar, rice, and tobacco-and that the white men of Northern Europe and America were constitutionally incapable of enduring the labor of producing these articles in such a climate.

The slave system of labor also prevented the planters from seeking, or in any way encouraging, an influx of white laborers, as the two were, to a certain extent, antagonistic; while on the part of the whites a reluctance to place themselves on an apparent level with the blacks had much to do with the absence of a white laboring agricultural people in the South. Hence the broad and fertile territory of the Northwest, much of which was thrown open to freedom and cultivation by the mother of States, Virginia, being free from the objections which presented themselves in the South, rich and cheap, were naturally and eagerly sought for by the immigrants, foreign and native; and by their labor, perseverance, and frugality have become rich and powerful. Their wild-rness has been converted into a fruitful garden, and their influence is felt throughout the world.

The late war having resulted in the abolition of slavery and compulsory labor, has been the means, at the same time, of opening up to the world the boundless resources of the country, in its soil and varied productions, its watercourses and mill privileges, its mineral wealth and genial climate; all now free from the objections once urged or thought to exist there. Land is good, plenty, and cheap. The old plan of colossal plantations is vanishing with the old system of labor which called them into existence, and an entirely different social status is being inaugurated. There is an abundance of valuable timber; its watercourses furnish an inexhaustible supply of power for mechanical and manufacturing purposes; its mines of coal, iron, copper, and gold are capa ble of yielding an abundant supply of these necessary and precions metals. With the modern improvements in agricultural implements the cultivation of the staples has been brought within easy range for white labor, and must prove remunerative to all who engage in the business.

The prosperity and perpetuity of this country, as a whole, depend, in a great measure. on the development of all its parts; and there is every reason to believe that when we sha'l have peace we shall have prosperity; that the crushing hand of despotic government will be removed and its fostering care bestowed instead; that party resentment and strife will be abandoned, and that the whole South will rise refreshed and invigorated, and, with an industrious population, again take its once proud position in the nation where intellect shall not be tabooed nor ignorance exalted. When the Ku-Klux myth shall be forgotten and the carpet-baggers shall make room for the sturdy sons of toil; when the white man shall rule under the Jeffersonian motto of "Equal and exact justice to all men, of whatever persuasion, religious or political," when faua-ticism shall be banished the land, or confined to its original limits, then unmolested labor shall meet its just reward.

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