

2 SPIRIT OF THE PRESS.

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

The Tenure of Office.

From the N. Y. Tribune. If there be those who supported the act of March 2, 1867, regarding the tenure of civil offices, simply or mainly because Andrew Johnson, then President, had proved a renegade and traitor, and was bent on thrusting from office those who did not unite in his apostasy, they may with perfect consistency now favor the unqualified repeal of that measure; but we are not of them. We heartily supported that act because we believed it substantially just, beneficial, and intended to arrest a baleful practice based on an assumption of power unwarranted by the Federal Constitution.

This is no new question. When General Jackson claimed the right to remove at pleasure all officers appointed by the President, the Judiciary excepted, no matter whether faithful or unfaithful, and insisted that the Senate had no business with his reasons for so doing, and could consider only the fitness of those nominated by him to serve their stead, we opposed him with the earnestness of profound, deliberate conviction. We believed his assumption as groundless as would have been a claim that he could at will appoint a citizen from his obligation to obey the laws of the land whereof he was the Chief Executive. So believing, we hailed the passage of the Tenure-of-Office act as initiating a necessary and beneficent reform, which was in no sense an encroachment on the President's prerogative, but a simple return to the doctrine and the practice of the founders and fathers of the Republic. That life-long Jackson Democrats like General Butler should take a different view of the matter does not surprise us; but that veteran Whigs, like Garrett Davis and James Brooks, should take their positions on themselves, would be amazing if they had not already set all principle and consistency at ostentatious defiance.

There was never any one who could surpass a strict constructionist of the Virginia Democratic school in justifying the most monstrous stretches of power. The Federal Constitution (Art. II) explicitly says:—

"Section 2. The President shall nominate, and by and with the advice and consent of the Senate shall appoint, ambassadors, other public ministers and consuls, Judges of the Supreme Court, and all other officers of the United States whose appointments are not herein otherwise provided for, and which shall be established by law; but the Congress may, by law vest the appointment of such inferior officers as they think proper in the President alone, in the courts of law, or in the heads of departments."

"Sec. 3. The President shall have power to fill up all vacancies that may happen during the recess of the Senate, by granting commissions which shall expire at the end of their next session."

—Possibly, some one may deduce from these two sections a Presidential right to remove, in the recess of the Senate, officers for no other cause than their dissent from his politics and accord with those of the Senate; but our eyes are too dull to detect it. We cannot doubt the intent of the Constitution to limit the power of removal in the recess of the Senate to cases wherein the President fully believes that the Senate would concur if in session. And we hold the requirement of the "advice and consent of the Senate" a shadow, a mockery, a sham, if the President, the instant the Senate shall have adjourned, may expel from office those to whom appointment that body has just assented, and appoint in their stead men whom he knows they would not have confirmed. And when to this is added an assumption that the Senate has no right to inquire into the reasons for removal, but may only inquire and consider whether the new nominee is fit for the place, the power of the Senate is so shorn and shrunk that it would be more decent and decorous to dispense with confirmation altogether, and let the President appoint and remove at his best comfort with his own good pleasure.

These convictions, we need not say, were formed long before we ever heard of General Grant, and are no wise affected by the circumstance that he is about to be inaugurated President. We have never asked nor cared what he thought of the Tenure-of-Office act, nor whether he preferred its retention, its modification, or its repeal. We are not accustomed to recast or twist our opinions to adapt them to the meridian of the White House. We have no doubt that General Grant's nominations for Cabinet posts will be confirmed by the Senate without hesitation or division, and that his nominees for less important positions will be acted on as rapidly as even he can desire, and that, if any shall be rejected (which we do not expect), it will be for reasons which, if reasonably known to him, would have precluded their nomination. The endeavor by lying gossip to foment a quarrel on this subject between the President elect and the Senate is a weak device of their common adversaries, and will be treated with the contempt it deserves.

Starvation as a Penalty for Political Heresy.

From the N. Y. Times. The proposition to refuse Commissioner Wells his salary, because some of his views on questions of political economy do not suit the majority in Congress, shows how very much below their places men in office can be. The proposal came from a high protective tariff man of Pennsylvania—one who is himself personally interested in having the moderate dimensions of a peace establishment has met the same fate. This Congress has done the things it ought not, and left undone the things which it was incumbent on it to do.

The measure in which it has taken the deepest interest and debated with the most vigor, is the proposed constitutional amendment for establishing universal negro suffrage in all the States. This measure lies directly in the teeth of General Grant's lauded exhortation, "let us have peace;" an exhortation which, if meant anything, denoted the introduction of new topics of strife on the negro question. It is a shameful breach of the pledge, made in the Chicago platform, that the Republican party would respect the right of the loyal States to regulate the suffrage for themselves. The party went into the election with this hypocritical promise, and before the President is inaugurated whom they elected on the faith of it, they perilously attempt to force universal negro suffrage upon the whole country.

The immediate successor of this scandalous Congress bids fair to inherit all its worst qualities. A blunder than the present Congress it cannot be, for the leading members of the one will be also the leading members of the other. It will be just as extravagant, just as incompetent to deal with the great questions of finance and taxation, as the expiring Congress. It will be just as fanatical, wrong-headed, and corrupt; but if General Grant should do his duty, there will be Democrats enough in the new House to make the army veto modest, which, though it may prevent new abuses, can do nothing to rectify those that already exist. The prospect is gloomy enough; but if there be any gleam of hope for the ensuing year, it comes from the prospect of a

effect of protection on manufactures, the wages of labor, and the general welfare of the people; and in his report he publishes all the information thus acquired, and draws from it the inference that the public ought not to pay too high a tax in order to "protect" Mr. Moorehead and his fellows.

The inference may, or may not, be sound, and the facts from which it is drawn may, or may not, be reliable. Both these are fair points for discussion. But Mr. Moorehead scorns all such resorts. He has a shorter and more conclusive mode of "refuting" Mr. Wells' arguments and disposing of his statistics. He will stop his salary. He will starve him in belief in the doctrine of protection, and at the same time punish him for having ever doubted it, and for having said things which induce other people to doubt it. And as Mr. Stevens succeeded in at once gratifying his own resentment and in compelling Mr. Harvey to quit Portugal and come home in a state of starved admiration at the freedom of private opinion which prevails in this country, so Mr. Moorehead may fairly hope to drive Mr. Wells out of the Commission of Internal Revenue, which he has made respectable by his doubts about protection, in solitary retirement on bread and water. And to this the House assents!

We expect to see this plan of enforcing opinions applied to all departments of the Government. Why should a President who differs from Congress be allowed a salary? Why should a heretical Congressman (that is to say, one who does not believe whatever the majority believes) draw pay and mileage and eat as good a dinner as one of the elect? There must be a stop put to this sort of thing. These are some score or more of members who have become infected with Mr. Wells' notions:—Why should they not share his fate? Why should Mr. Allison be allowed to "defend the Special Commissioner," and still continue to draw his salary? And why, above all, should Mr. Pike, of Maine, be permitted to support President Johnson's veto of the Copper Tariff bill, and still be allowed to eat and drink and pay for his dinner, like Christians and other good protectionists?

The Fortieth Congress on its Deathbed.

From the N. Y. World. This mischievous Congress is near its last gasp, and even its own friends do not regret that it is soon to be sent to its final account. It has shown some faint symptoms of a death-bed repentance, but they are quite unavailing. It has not enough moral vigor to undo any of its wrongs, although some of its friends and hearers have done their best to awaken its tardy conscience. General Grant and "the Grant party" have tried to procure a repeal of the demoralizing Tenure-of-Office act—an act which has made the revenue service a national infamy, and bars the possibility of reform; but the desire of Senators to keep their corrupt friends in office prevents a compliance with General Grant's wishes, and will induce him into office as a manacled and powerless President. On other subjects, this ignoble Congress has not exhibited the faintest indication of repentance.

This Congress fails to do any of the things which its own party acknowledges to be obligatory. When the present session commenced everybody admitted that our systems of finance and taxation needed a thorough overhauling and revision. Nothing of the kind has been done. It was admitted that measures should be passed at this session to put the country on the road to specie payments. We are left to flounder on precisely as if the halls of Congress had stood deserted, and their vacancy disturbed by no other sounds than the hum of scribbling mice. Of the projects and propositions there has been no lack; but no measure has been passed, none has been even proposed, which would lift us a single inch out of the deplorable slough. We have a tariff that strangles industry; and although nobody undertakes to defend its details, nothing has been done on that subject beyond the passage of the Copper bill—a bill which is calculated to put money into the pockets of the owners of the Lake Superior copper stocks, to the injury of the prostrate shipping interest and of all industries which make use of the metal. Everybody feels, and even the Chicago Convention acknowledged, that the rate of interest on our public debt is too high; but this Congress has done nothing to facilitate the substitution of other bonds bearing a lower rate. The bastard reconstruction, on whose triumphant success the Chicago platform congratulated the country, is a failure in three—including Georgia, in four—of the most important States; and even on this subject Congress exhibits the same imbecility it has displayed on all others. General Grant made a strong recommendation in his annual report in favor of the transfer of Indian affairs to the War Department, and although that recommendation was concurred in by General Sherman and by all officers who have had the best opportunities for forming a sound judgment respecting our dealings with the Indians. Congress says no, caring more for the profits of knavish Indian agents and traders which their gains with Congressmen, than for honest administration, or for the welfare of the Indians, or the peace of the frontier, or the wishes of the President-elect. Early in the winter General Grant denounced, with great freedom and emphasis, the profuse bounties to railroads; and Congress has nevertheless wasted a great part of the session on projects of this kind. A bill was introduced for reforming the scandalous abuses of the franking privilege, but it has been shelved. Another bill for reducing to the moderate dimensions of a peace establishment has met the same fate. This Congress has done the things it ought not, and left undone the things which it was incumbent on it to do.

The measure in which it has taken the deepest interest and debated with the most vigor, is the proposed constitutional amendment for establishing universal negro suffrage in all the States. This measure lies directly in the teeth of General Grant's lauded exhortation, "let us have peace;" an exhortation which, if meant anything, denoted the introduction of new topics of strife on the negro question. It is a shameful breach of the pledge, made in the Chicago platform, that the Republican party would respect the right of the loyal States to regulate the suffrage for themselves. The party went into the election with this hypocritical promise, and before the President is inaugurated whom they elected on the faith of it, they perilously attempt to force universal negro suffrage upon the whole country.

Progress of the Revolution in Cuba.

From the N. Y. Herald. General Caballero de Roda is to succeed General Dulce as Governor-General in the Island of Cuba. This is the tenor of a short despatch from Madrid—short but full of meaning. General Dulce was the man for conciliation, the man of the amnesty, free press, free speech, and representation in the Cortes. Roda is the man who put down insurrection in Cadix with the cannon and deluged the streets of dissatisfied Malaga with grape shot. The two men represent great principles and give a fair picture of the change which has come over the dream of Spain in relation to Cuba. The progress of the revolution there has been so rapid and so great that a new policy has succeeded the old one in the Spanish Government as well as in the Spanish population in Cuba. The latter at first scorned the idea that the Cubans could or would do anything towards overthrowing the colonial government. Now they have done so much that the Spanish population in Cuba think that every Cuban should be at once tried by a military commission and executed to save the honor of Spain.

Caballero de Roda comes to Cuba to fall more signally than Dulce has done, and Dulce has fallen from the want of common sense on the part of the home government and the Spaniards residing in the island. Had he been authorized to act in the spirit of the nineteenth century instead of the sixteenth, and to establish a Colonial Assembly, he would have preserved the island to the Spanish monarchy. There were not wanting Cubans in Madrid who urged these views upon General Dulce before his departure for Cuba, but he either could not or would not listen to them. He now goes back with the simple satisfaction that he can say to Azarate and Berna, "You were right." The Caballero de Roda comes to a different banquet—a banquet of blood. From Cape Mayal to the river Danau, two-thirds of the territorial extent of the island of Cuba, the Spanish Government holds only the ground its troops stand upon or the guns of its ships cover. Instead of being able to reconquer the Central and Eastern Departments the struggle will now be to hold the Western, for there the fires of revolution have caught at several points. This will require more troops than Spain can under any contingency send to Cuba, and more money and material resources than Roda can possibly gather. He may shed much blood, he may rival Murillo of Venezuela in infamy, but the result will be the same—the Spanish element must leave Cuba or perish by the sword they have drawn.

In the early future a sore difficulty will press upon our Government. When your neighbor's house is on fire, the principles of intervention is an admitted right. Not only may we intervene to save ourselves from danger, but the voice of humanity calls us as well to save the life and property. If the tenant, possessed with the fury of a madman, insists upon consigning everything to the flames, he may be controlled or even dispossessed. This madman's policy would seem to be that which inspires the Spanish element in Cuba, and our Government, as the next and strongest neighbor,

will be called upon to intervene. We must intervene there. The day has gone by when the madman of Europe can be permitted to repeat the atrocities which the early part of the present century witnessed in every Spanish American country on this continent. The establishment of a free government in Cuba and its admission to the Union would be the best solution for all parties there, and one which would save us infinite trouble in the future. The Jacksonian policy in Florida is the only one which will save General Grant from a host of Spanish flies, and he should be prepared to adopt it in his own behalf and that of the country.

Dining the Rebel Chiefs.

From the N. Y. Herald. The volunteer Cabinet-maker and general dispenser of titles, the incoming administration, finding his occupation gone in that line of business, has undertaken the rôle of the late Miles O'Reilly in getting up fancy dinners. The initiator, in this as in almost every other special field of enterprise, falls behind the original explorer; but still in this case he will pass. His latest effort is pretty fair. It is a fancy sketch of a dinner for the Manhattan Club, at which it appears numerous other Rebel chiefs were present, sandwiched between the leading members of the club. Genuine or fictitious, the grouping of names and characters is consistent with their Democratic affiliations, and we know, too, that since the war the Manhattan Club, in view of the reconstruction of the Democratic party, has lost no opportunity to dine and wine, in a quiet way, every Rebel chief dropping into the metropolis; and we know that nearly all of them, from Jeff Davis down to Mosby, have dropped in, from time to time, under the benign dispensation of Andy Johnson.

A great haul of these Rebel big fish was made at the National Tammany Convention of July last, and a great outlay in the South and champagne was cheerfully adopted by the Manhattan Club in doing the honors to these distinguished guests. "Cui bono?" It was for the same reason that a man plants a field of cotton or buys a bit of ground or dabbles in Erie. It is all a matter of speculation. For instance, the New York engineers of the Manhattan Club laid and managed the wires of the Tammany National Convention. They found in that Convention a Southern balance of power represented by the Rebel chiefs present, and by cultivating General Wade Hampton and his associate paladins in the Southern chivalry, "the bloated bondholders" of the club were enabled to wind "the Pendleton escort" round their fingers.

Here, then, the mysteries of these Manhattan dinners or suppers to these leaders of the "lost cause" is explained. It is simply the George Sanders method of electioneering reduced to a regular system of a good cellar of wine and a liberal fund for the Washington market. The Manhattan Club have lively hopes of a Democratic Presidency in 1872. They have been, since the fall of Tammany Hall, preparing for their next great opportunity. They anticipate the restoration, with the nigger vote, of their old Southern balance of power in the next national election, and they are laying their pipe and wires among the magnates of the South for the convention, because the convention will settle everything. Thus the investment, in the kindly offices of fraternal hospitality, of a good feed occasionally, involving a dozen or two baskets of wine and a few barrels of Saddle Rocks and Shrewsbury, in honor of some such restraining Democratic prodigal son as Wade Hampton, Beauregard, Forrest, Magruder, Dick Taylor, Breckinridge, Captain Semmes or Jake Thompson, may yield in 1872 the splendid dividends of the spoils of the succession. And why not? Is there a more beautiful lesson in the Holy Scriptures than that of the prodigal son and the killing of the fatted calf in honor of his repentance and return home again? Is there an example of forgiveness that can be more worthily followed, especially if it can be made to pay better than a petroleum well or a gold mine? In this way and in this view the Manhattan Club, like charity, has covered a multitude of sins, and still its wine is not exhausted nor are its oysters all consumed.

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