

SPiRiT OF THE PRESS.

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

Taxing the Poor.

From the N. Y. Tribune. We do not defend any resolution merely because some knot or convention of Republicans may have passed it, nor condemn any because passed by Democrats. For instance, we like the clause in the last National Democratic platform demanding such an adjustment of our tariff on imports to our internal revenue taxation as shall protect American manufactures...

It is not, therefore, because Republicans adopt it, but because it is sound, that we endorse the following plank of the recent Connecticut Convention, into which the New York Times and Evening Post are trying by high pressure to force the virus of free trade, but which we do not take to be sufficiently porous to admit their injection. The resolution calls upon Congress to:

First, formally affirm that when the national debt is paid it shall be paid in gold; except where it is otherwise distinctly provided in the original contract; second, introduce the strictest economy into every branch of the Government; third, refuse all subsidies and appropriations to railroads and other enterprises outside of the indispensable machinery of the Government; fourth, see to it that the taxes are impartially levied and energetically and honestly collected, and surplus revenues applied to the reduction of the debt; fifth, make it a constant aim to resume specie payment and give the people a uniform and steady currency, as soon as may be without a violent disturbance of the business of the country; and to impose it as far as possible upon articles of luxury.

Now this is so distinctly a Tribune platform as well as a Republican one, that we pity the mental weakness of the dolt that can bother his brain by looking for any endorsement of foreign free trade in it. We ask that taxation shall be removed from labor and the necessities of life first, and imposed so far as possible on articles of luxury. Now what are the taxes that rest most heavily on labor and the necessities of life? First and heaviest come the duties "for revenue only," levied on the leading articles of food which every laborer uses three times a day, every day in the year, viz., tea, coffee, and sugar. At least one-third of our entire gold revenue is levied on these three articles alone.

We have been among the miners of Pennsylvania, the frontiersmen, woodsmen, and hunters of the West, as well as among the laborers of cities and the soldiers of our armies, and we have observed that at the average the first thing a working man or woman demands, when exhausted by exposure to cold, or heat, or rain, is a cup of coffee, or a slice of bread, or a piece of meat. The necessities of life are the only ones on which the tariff rests, are these. The tariff on these articles is for revenue only, as we do not produce them (except sugar to the amount of one-tenth of our consumption), and the principle of protection would demand that they be free. A family will use as much in value of tea, coffee, and sugar in a week as they will of salt, lumber, and iron in a year. A poor family will use as much of either as a rich one. These are the classes of tariff taxes that rest heavily upon labor, and the moment we can afford to lessen our taxation there are the taxes that we and every protectionist will demand the repeal of. Will free traders, like the Times, World, and Post, unite with us in removing these free trade taxes from labor? On the other hand, we regard the importation of French and Prussian beaver cloths, cassimeres, and doekings, to take the place of American cloths of equal fineness, texture, and durability, as something that would be a luxury if it were not a nuisance. We regard the importation of sixth-rate English rails, as shown in Mr. Hewett's Report on Iron, to be taken up and re-rolled after six months' use, at the average, and of such abominable reputation that they find no sale in European markets, and their substitution in place of American iron and steel rails, than which no better or really cheaper are produced in the world, as something that would be a luxury, i. e., a waste of wealth, if it were not something far worse. We will go to any extent with all who really want to lighten the taxes on labor. But what the Post and World want is to food British goods into our markets, so that their exporters, the importers, and auctioneers, can have a good time in selling them. Meanwhile, the country would come to grief in trying to export gold and bonds enough to pay for them.

Opening Fire on General Grant.

From the N. Y. Times. If we may believe the World, General Grant is remarkable for "confidence and self-reliance." He is declared to be more presumptuous than Washington, Adams, Jefferson, Madison, or Monroe, because, while avowing his sense of the responsibilities of his position, he ventures to "accept them without fear." His address is characterized as "empty," offensive in its "self-assertion," yet "really very servile." The entire document is assailed as proof of weakness for his position, and of a character in which conceit and subservience are about equally mixed.

A few days ago the World had a different estimate of General Grant's character. It then represented him as modest, self-reliant, and sensible under the influence of extraordinary temptations, as indicating, in fact, "great solidity of character and an inborn sense of duty." Our contemporary said: "His character is surely cast in no common mould. He has undergone the severest trial to which character can be subjected—without prosperity, and a sudden, giddy elevation—and he has stood the test in a manner which would have done no discredit to any man that has ever lived. His head has never been turned by his wonderful fortune, he has exhibited no levity, no foolish vanity, none of the weaknesses of a peasant, none of the besetting wickedness of a potent; but has borne himself with a quiet and becoming reserve which, under the circumstances, bespeaks great solidity of character and an inborn sense of duty."

From the World's present low opinion we appeal to its high opinion of last Monday. The best answer to the personal attack from that quarter is the testimony which emanated from it before General Grant indicated the policy of his administration.

But General Grant "does not intend to have any serious differences with the Republican party." That is the difficulty with the World. It disclaimed every expectation of direct help for the Democracy from this administration; but cherished hopes of a quarrel with some portion of the Republican party. These hopes the inauguration has dispelled. Its language shows that General Grant still occupying the ground on which he was elected, and because the ground happens to be identical with the general principles and purposes of Republicanism, he is secured for his "servility."

dence to differ from his party on any particular. What then? Does independence consist in difference without cause? Was it to oppose the man whose conduct "betokens great solidity of character and an inborn sense of dignity" would falsify his own principles and predilections in order that by quarrelling with the Republican party he might exhibit his independence?

The attack of the World, unreasonable as it is, illustrates the kind of criticism to which the new President will be subjected. His opponents are on the look-out for small faults of literary style, or for the slightest departure from old rules of action. They will assail him because he does not aspire to be original or profound in political philosophy, and because his ethics lend no favor to treachery or tergiversation. The country is prepared to interpret both his words and his conduct in a different spirit. It sees already that he bears no resemblance to Andrew Johnson. It draws a proper distinction between a consistent adherence to the principles and aims of the party that elected him and abject obedience to partisan behests. Above all, it recognizes in his large patriotism and distinguished services evidence of honest devotion to duty, in the generosity of his character a guarantee against intolerance or proscription, and in the general tone of his address the precursor of a policy in which sound common sense, practical ability, and undeviating rectitude will largely preponderate.

The Cuba Question.

From the N. Y. Tribune. The inauguration in Cuba is now passing into its second stage. Spain having successfully asserted her independence of a degraded and oppressive monarchy, her children naturally followed the example, and endeavored to rid themselves of a system which was quite as degrading and oppressive to them as ever the Bourbon dynasty was to the mother country. It was then for centuries the Spanish policy to ignore all rights of her colonies, but providing money in no scanty measure to the necessities of Spain, to pour on to their shores crowds of hungry officials, not always of reputable character, and often adventurers who as literally "left their country for their country's good" as if they had been transported by the legal tribunals. All the places of trust were filled by these offshoots from Spain, and no opportunity was ever given for native talent, while native industry was cramped and shattered. No wonder, therefore, that one by one Spain's colonies have slipped from her grasp, and the last and most cherished excites all the energies of the Home Government to prevent the dire example to be followed by the Queen of the Antilles. Dulce, personally popular in Cuba, and fully enjoying the confidence of the Home Government, came out charged with the impossible duties of recognizing the rights of the colony and reconciling them with the pretensions of Spain. It was a significant fact that he was accompanied by shipsloads of needy applicants for office, shelved by the Provisional Government and sent out to prey on the Goshen of Cuba. As was to be expected, his mission has failed and he has been forced to assume the offensive. In the meantime his successor is on the sea to supersede him, and the scabbard is thrown away. Let us look at the forces in opposition, both physical and moral. The native Cubans to a man—even women and children—are sworn to win their independence. Those even who cannot take arms cheerfully give up their property, and, if such cases exist, the who are neutral or lukewarm have their possessions sequestered by their friends and neighbors for the cause that all have at heart. It may be taken for granted that the whole native population are unanimous for emancipation from Spain. On the other hand, the whole power of the mother country is pledged to prevent it. Independently of national honor, which ranks higher in the Castilian mind than in most nations, the material worth of Cuba is so great, the practical value of such a colony, especially in the present impoverished state of Spain, is so thoroughly presented to the mind of every Spaniard, that they will strain every nerve to prevent her breaking the chain. Such a war will be one of the most popular that could be presented to the people, and most nearly touches their pockets. In the sympathy which every free-born man must feel for the native Cubans, we must be careful not to underrate the resources of Spain, or to ignore the serious reasons she has for abhorring the independence of Cuba, as a direct robbery upon her public and private purse. There is also a third element in the contest, and that not the least, though by no means apparently prominent, viz.: the recently and prospectively emancipated colored population. It is worthy of observation that the insurgents recognized the principle only when the news arrived of its proclamation by the Provisional Government at home; nor is this to be wondered at, for men are seldom in a hurry to divest themselves of valuable "property" they hold as their own. We have not yet sufficient evidence of what the action of the colored men has been up to this date to be certain of what it will be. Then as to the moral phases. All history is apt to reproduce itself; nor are the Castilian races in any portion of the globe much different from their immediate, nor indeed their remote, progenitors. The Spaniards are very chary of foreign intervention, accept it grudgingly, set it in the front of the battle, give it all the labor, all the expense, and all the aid with an ingratitude which has no parallel in the history of nations. Both sides are well aware that upon the amount of American help depends the success or failure of this struggle for independence. Commercially as well as politically the welfare of Cuba must be a vital question for American politicians.

With this view of the case, which it is just to present as the fair deduction from the latest news, we cannot but add our fullest sympathy with the cause of the revolution. If the revolution is good for Spain, it is good for her splendid colony. We commend prudence, statesmanship, and persistency. Cuba has her fate in her hands, if her true sons will it. Nations, like men, have periods when destiny seems to stretch out its hand. They are the wisest who do not fail to see it. May Cuba and her gallant sons be wise with the best wisdom.

The Foreign Policy of the New Administration.

From the N. Y. Herald. President Grant has boldly laid down a rule of action in his inaugural with reference to a foreign policy, saying:—"I would deal with nations as equitable law requires individuals to deal with each other." * * * "I would respect the rights of all nations, demanding equal respect for our own. If others depart from this rule in their dealings with us, we may be compelled to follow their precedent." This is clear, unvarnished language, readily understood. It will do more to effect a cordial and immediate understanding with foreign powers than all the Machiavellian statesmanship of the past four years. It is a simple enunciation of our desire for strict justice, and when we fail to obtain it, and there is no disposition on the part of the offender to grant it, then there is but a single resource left for us, and that is the law of retaliation. For instance, if England makes no reparation for the Alabama outrages, it is plain that there is but one mode of settlement left to us, and that the taking of Canada as a just reprisal. The Minister who now so sadly misrepresents us must be immediately recalled, and a fiercer and more dignified exponent of the United States policy be sent to the Court of St. James. If the President's words are the gleam of action then this will at once be done.

There is a Spanish-Cuban question also on hand. The resolution lately passed in the House of Representatives with reference to it is the best Executive guide. President Grant will not satisfy the people of the United States unless he takes prompt measures to give at once the whole moral influence of our Government to the liberal movement there. We do not want Cuba desolated because Spain cannot hold it; and we are "compelled to follow the precedent" set by Spain when she lent her indirect aid to the breaking up of our republicanism.

On the southwest we find a people who settle into chronic anarchy and block the progress of at least one-third of our territory. Mexico neither moves herself nor permits us to move. Our Executive should carefully submit a general plan of national policy to Mexico which shall be in unison with our own. If the Mexicans refuse to listen to it, their Government must disappear to give place to a military colonial government under the direction of the United States. There is also a policy to be adopted with reference to South America. There are over thirty millions of people there consuming per capita over seven dollars' worth of goods annually, and producing for exportation a still larger amount. There are two principles of government struggling there for the mastery, the one monarchical, supported by power, by European influence, and the other republican, unsupported and hitherto almost derided by the great republic.

In the next four years there is to be shaped an Asiatic policy, around which may cluster more of future greatness to our people than we at present dream of. This future must be formed with wisdom and with a breadth in proportion to its promise. Asia will soon be as closely linked to us as Europe, and it is unwise to let it grow into prominence without legislative notice. The clear common sense language of the President, however, gives us every hope that we are now to have, not only with reference to Asia, but with all the world, a boldly defined national policy that will enable foreign powers to understand that which it has been impossible for them to learn heretofore—that the United States proposes toward them and what is expected in return.

Financial Views of the Inaugural Address.

From the N. Y. Herald. President Grant has devoted the largest portion of his brief and terse inaugural address to the financial situation of the country. This shows that he regards the subject as most important and overwhelming all other subjects. He lays great stress upon the necessity of protecting the national honor by paying every dollar of the public debt, and the interest as it becomes due according to the contract. To do this he would give the public

creditor the benefit of any doubt, even as to how certain securities should be paid, and emphatically declares that every portion of the debt should be paid in gold, unless otherwise expressly stipulated in the contract. This will have the effect, undoubtedly, of appreciating the market value of our Five-twenty bonds both abroad and at home. He will not trust any one in public office who is a repudiator. He believes that by making this the policy of the Government we shall be enabled ultimately to convert the debt into bonds bearing less interest than we now pay.

To accomplish this object he deems it important, however, that there should be a faithful collection of the revenue, a strict accountability to the Treasury for every dollar collected, and the greatest practical retrenchment in expenditures in every department of government. These are brave words; and we have no doubt our new President will use all his power to carry out the views expressed. But it will be necessary for Congress to condescend in aid him in the good work. The Government has been defrauded in the collection of the revenue a hundred millions a year, and the expenditures in these times of peace are at least a hundred millions more than is necessary. It may be in his power to save all this by reorganizing, in the first place, the whole machinery of the Revenue Department and holding the heads of it responsible; and, in the second place, by cutting down the expenditures of every branch of the executive government. There are a thousand ways in which he can do this—in the army, in the navy, in the civil service, and in checking the extravagant appropriations of Congress. It is evident he is opposed to further large appropriations for railroads, however valuable such works may be, till the finances of the country be restored and we reach a specie basis; for he intimates that the Government should give its aid to these only when a dollar of obligation to pay shall be no more in value than the dollar of aid that may be afforded—that is, the Government should not lend its credit in a depreciated currency and then have to pay in gold.

On the subject of reaching specie payments President Grant takes a sensible and practical view. He desires to return to a specie basis, but only when it can be accomplished without material detriment to the debtor class or to the country at large. How the public debt is to be paid or specie payments resumed is not so important, he says, as that a plan should be adopted and acquiesced in. He admits that legislation on this subject may not be necessary now, nor even advisable, but will be when the civil law is more fully restored in all parts of the country and trade resumes its wonted channels. The first step, he maintains, is to see that our present commerce be rebuilt and all industries encouraged as the basis of resuming specie payments, restoring the finances, and paying the debt. This is just what we have maintained all along. Specie payments will come gradually and as insensibly as the dew falls, when the national finances shall be placed on a good foundation, retrenchment and economy be practised, and as the industry and trade of the country become improved and developed. Those inexhaustible mines of precious metals in the mountains of the Far West, too, which President Grant designates our "strong box," will be unlocked and contribute to our present commerce by the re-issuance of specie circulation. On the whole, President Grant takes a sensible, practical, and conservative view of the financial situation and prospects of the country. All that remains to be done is the application of the policy he has laid down and the co-operation of Congress in carrying it out.

It is to be hoped that the times for mediation cannot be far off. The Allies must now see the impossibility of achieving their object without simply destroying the Paraguayan race from off the face of the earth. And even supposing they are prepared to attempt and able to accomplish this, the blood and treasure which they would have to expend would be utterly out of proportion to the stake at issue. Their honor must be satisfied by the material triumphs they have gained in the face of the most heroic resistance, and we cannot help believing that judicious joint diplomatic action on the part of any two or three powers might put an end to a most sanguinary and uncalled-for struggle.

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