### SPIRIT OF THE PRESS.

EDITORIAL OPINIONS OF THE LEADING JOURNALS UPON CURRENT TOPICS -- COMPILED EVERT DAY FOR THE EVENING TELEGRAPH.

General Grant an the New Tenure-of-Office Law.

From the N. Y. Herald. The repealers have been cheated. The bill agreed upon by the joint committee of conference on the Tenure-of-Office law, and accepted by the late out-and-out Kepublican repealers

of both houses as a satisfactory adjustment, they say, proves to be a shabby trick. It appears that the new act, which it was thought restored to the President a decisive authority in the matter of removals and suspensions from office, does no such thing; but that in the case of a suspension from office upon which, within a limited time, the Senate shall have taken no action, such suspension lapses and the suspended officer is reinstated. Looking at the new act for its own interpretation, it is a case that might puzzle a Philadelphia lawyer, whether the law has been changed from tweedledee to tweedledum, or

from tweedledum to tweedledee.
But this compromise was Hobson's choice to the President; for it was either this or the old Andy Johnson law, which not only tied him fast in regard to removals and suspensions, but fastened his Cabinet upon him for his whole term, subject in any removal to the consent of the Senate. Now, as General Grant has intimated pretty broadly that when he shall become dissatisfied with any Cabinet officer he will make a change, even to the extent, if necessary, of changing the whole Cabi-net every week till he shall have found the right materials, the full liberty given him here by the Senate in this new law is an important point gained. But the difficulty suggested in the matter of supensions during the absence of the Senate still remains. The President may assume that the law means tweedledum; but if the Senate say that it means tweedledee they have him, or they bring him to an issue for the Supreme Court. Here it is. We will suppose that the Senate has adjourned and that John Smith, an unsatisfactory internal revenue officer in a good whisky district, has been, in the absence of the Senate, suspended, and that John Jones has been put in his place. We will next suppose that the Senate has reassembled, and that this suspension, according to law, has been reperted to the Senate, but that the session has closed without any action upon the case. Then it is claimed that, under this new law, Smith, the man suspended, goes back to his office, and Jones, the President's substitute, goes out.

But what does this signify if the President shall conclude to stick to Jones? In this emergency the Senate, on reassembling, will be waited upon by Smith and informed of his continued exclusion from his whisky inspections in defiance of the Senate's construction of the law. A resolution of inquiry upon the President will then be necessary in behalf of Smith. What then? All that the President will have to do will be to say to the Senate that according to his construction of the law Jones is the right man. It will be remembered that President Johnson found in one of the Reconstruction laws a hole through which (as Daniel O'Connell said of the holes in the laws of Parliament) you might drive a coach and four, and that Johnson did drive his coach and four, labelled "My policy," through the hole aforesaid. This done, the two houses of Congress, under a special law provided to head off Johnson, speedily reassembled and passed an explanatory law, filling up the hole in question and heading off Johnson over his veto, as

case of Jones the only alternative to the Senate will be the same thing-a law explanatory of this new Tenure-of-Office actbut if they attempt it they will be swamped in the House and the President will have the victory. The case is clear enough. The President must execute the laws; but where there is manifestly a trick of pettifogging in a law capable of two or three constructions, the President must execute it as he understands it. In doing this, in default of any explanatory law, he may get up a case for the Supreme Court, where, as that court now stands, all this office legislation trenching upon the unbroken practice of the Government down to the tying up of Johnson would doubtless be pronounced unconstitutional and void. It would be a great thing for the country, too, if General Grant were to seize the first opportunity to make a case for the Supreme Court which would result in defining the constitutional rights of the Executive and the metes and bounds of Congress.

The Quality of Mercy. From the N.Y. Tribune.

The opinions of Mr. Senator Cameron on most questions are entitled to great respect. He is the oldest Senator in Congress, and, as the War Secretary who first saw the necessity of accepting the aid of the negro in crushing the Rebellion, his judgment has greater weight than that of most of the men in our national legislature. We regret to see, however, that he ranges himself on the side of the policy of vengeance. His speech in the secret session the other day on the question of con-firming the nomination of General Longstreet will, no doubt, be acceptable to a great many of our people. We have the merest abstract of that speech, which comes through the whispers of Senators who were present; and though it is hardly fair to make any discussion upon what may, after all, turn out to be the gossip of the Washington lobby, it seems pretty certain that Senator Cameron has taken ground against the confirmation, and that he bases his action on certain doings and sayings of the General while he was commander of an army corps in Pennsylvania. We echo all that Senstor Cameron may say

about the sins of the Rebellion. There is no censure too severe to be passed upon men who took up arms against the Government; but of all the members of that mighty conspiracy, those who deserved the least were the men who commanded its armies. We do not re-member an instance in which a prominent leader of the secession movement rose to eminence in the military service of the Confederacy. They were speedily swept away by the advent of men more gifted in war, and pos-sessed of a higher and lottier courage. What remains of the Southern Confederacy as a historic recollection is distributed among the corto recollection is distributed among the names of Lee, and Jackson, and Beauregard, and Johnston, and Longstreet. With the exception perhaps of General Lee, all these men were dragged into the Rebellion, they had nothing to do with planning it, and we believe if they had been permitted to express their opinion in the councils of the Rebel leaders during the winter of secession they during the winter of secession, they would gladly have remained with the old flag. It was the political parties, the desperate en-deavor of gamblers in politics, of men like Wise, and Davis, and Wigfall, and Benjamin, that overcame the chivalrous impulses of soldiers like James Longstreet and Stonewall

These men went into the Rebellion as soldiers. They fought us with the bravery of gallant men; they risked their lives for the struggle, and stood by it until the last modular men.

Europe or shrank into bemb-proofs. When the cause of the R-bellion was really a lost cause, they were the first to acknowledge that fact, and since the war they have, as a class, been better citizens, more thoroughly recon-ciled to the Government, more anxious for peace and union. The real malcontents of the South are the men who planned secession during the peaceful days of Buchanau, and who avoided war when war came upon them. General Longstreet was a z-alous soldier; he fought for his cause with the conscience of a man who believed in it, and who carried his life in his hands. He was the second in command when Lee surrendered. . He might have followed the example of Lee, crept into a sort of retirement, looking upon reconstruction with apathy, and saying nothing towards pacification and reunion, and so retained in the South a commanding popularity. He took higher ground. Although he knew that the step would bring odium upon himself, he promptly embraced the principles of the Republican party, and gave all the influence of his illustrious name towards the fullest and most perfect restoration of the Union. Of all the Rebel commanders General Longstreet is the most unpopular with the Rebels of the South. His unpopularity, however, is only for a day; in another generation it will be seen how truly wise and great he has been.

Now, what shall we do with such a man? Senator Camerou thinks we owe him punishment, isolation, vengeance. President Grant believes that by appointing him to an office in New Orleans he gives the best pledge to the true men of the South that he means to deal generously with them, and welcome them back into the Union. Senator Cameron's policy is simply that of passion. President Grant's is the highest statesmanship and wisdom. The men who fought with General Longstreet are our brothers in many respects, our kinsmen, our fellow-citizens, the men upon whom we must depend in future wars, the leaders of many large communities in the South, who are, for weal or woe, to be our fellow-citizens, under the protection of our flag, and to undergo all the duties of citizenship. If we follow the policy of General Cameron we only isolate this large community, and say to the Southern people:—"The crime of rebellion is an unpardonable sin; you live with us, but you are not of us; you are aliens, and you have life itself only by a mistaken mercy." The President says:—"The past is buried with the past: in war we showed vengeance, in peace we show magnanimity. Now, if you will come back to us in good faith, we welcome you as our brothers and our fellow-

This is a small office. We presume, so far as the mere gathering of the customs is concerned, General Longstreet is a better man than nine-tenths of the people of New Orleans who will be acceptable to Governor Brownlow and General Cameron. He will do his duty; he will serve the country, and no public interest will be injured by his holding this office. That is the practical consideration. A higher thought is, that by the confirmation of General Longstreet, nothing remains of the Rebellion but a bitter memory. The duty of the present is peace and loyalty. If you intend to keep the dark memories alive you will invoke the vengeance of the Government; if you mean to forget the past and accept the responsibility of the present, assisting the restoration of the Union, and giving to the Constitution and the laws a sincere and earnest support, then you are our fellows in citizenship, and share with us the blessings of the Union. Senator Cameron can do no wiser thing than use his great influence in impressing this lesson upon the South, It is a short-sighted policy that would rebuke President Grant for nominating General Longstreet to an office. We can hardly think that the Senate will refuse to confirm this selecand our only regret is that it has not been done as promptly and cordially as the nomination was made.

#### The Regular Army. From the N. Y. Times.

The "Plea for the Regulars," which a correspondent sends to the *Times*, is, if somewhat bitter in spirit and personal in allusion, a proper answer to the disgraceful army debates of the last month in the House. Such displays of temper and spleen against professional officers as those of Generals Schenck and Logan, such effrontery as that of General Butler, such buffoonery as that of Mr. Windom, were as unnecessary to the decision of the question at issue as they were unjust to the memory of gallant deeds and gallant dead. Discussing the size of the standing army and advocating reduction on grounds of economy, is one thing; jesting that army officers, who wear the honorable grey hairs of a noble, life-long service, and whose bodies bear the marks of wounds and hardships endured for the sake of the country, "never die, but live to draw their pay"—that is quite a different thing. We can have army legislation and army reduction without malignant detraction and vituperation.

General Butler's charge that "the regular officers had all found soft places at the end of the war," was as brazen as it was prejudiced. It is not for any man, however great his services, to sneer at such of the living as Grant, Sherman, Sheridan, Thomas, Meade, Schofield, Hancock, and the hundreds of their famous associates; or at such of the dead as Sedgwick, McPherson, Reno, Reynolds, Russell, and their gallant compatriots. But in General Butler this sort of depreciation was especially out of taste. If he be reminded of his own exploits at Big Bethel, Dutch Gap and Fort Fisher, as compared with those of the despised "regulars" at, for example, Murfreesboro in the West, and Gettysburg in the East, he has only himself to thank for the comparison. The regular brigade went into Murfreesboro with 70 officers and 1400 men; it came out with but little more than half of its strength, 26 officers and 611 men being killed or wounded in the crisis of that one battle. At Gettysburg the slaughter of the two regular brigades was equally fearful. Of one brigade, 40 out of 80 officers, and 300 out of 800 men, fell in that battle.

Such were the troops of whom General Butler declared they had found "soft places somewhere." But we leave the "Plea for the Regulars" to tell the rest of the story. The next time we have army legislation to do, let us see if we cannot get through it without de-faming our own most illustrious officers.

Mr. Wells' Confutation of Judge Kelley From the N. Y. World,

If any of our readers happened to overlook or neglect the reply of Commissioner Wells to Judge Kelley, printed in the World of Thursday, they owe it to themselves to look up the paper and peruse that effective docu-ment with more than ordinary attention. Mr. Wells belongs to a class of public instructors whose productions no man who aims to be intelligent can afford to slight. He is no theorist; but he supplies with great affluence the data on which all sound economical theories must rest. He has a keen appreciation of the value of facts, an indefatigable diligence in collecting them, and a conscientious fidelity

ment, while the real conspirators hurried to | Bis facts are so fresh; they are collected from so large a circumference of investigation, are arranged in such lucid order, are so pertinent to pending questions, that, interpret them as we will, we are behind the intelligence of the age if we do not study them. Even when they merely confirm opinions which we previously held, they so relieve those opinions of vague ness, and give them such life, freshuess, and force, and such satisfactory definiteness o outline, that our oldest and tritest impres-sions acquire something of the gloss of no-

The copious array of facts and statistics in Mr. Wells' recent letter bears chiefly upon the opinion which he expressed in his annual report (and which Judge Kelley had the hardibood to dispute) that the rich are growing richer and the poor poorer; that the wages of labor bear a smaller proportion to the cost of living than previous to the war. This is, of course, a different question from the beneficial er detrimental effects of the present tariff; but Judge Kelley is a high tariff man, the mouthpiece and advocate of the Pennsylvania protectionists, and, despairing of a plausible at-tack on Mr. Wells' exposure of our absurd tariff, he tried to diminish his credit by an attempt to show that he had misrepresented the present condition of the laboring classes. Even if this attempt had been successful, it would have been little to the purpose; for Mr. Wells might have been entirely correct in his exposure of the tariff, even though he had been mistaken in his opinion that the distri-bution of wealth is different now from what it was before the war. But he has borne down and demolished Mr. Kelley on the collateral question, with an accumulation of facts which must make that gentleman repent his temerity. Never was a pretender to statistical accuracy more thoroughly riddled.

In a production of which every part is so

thorough and able, it may be difficult to say which branch of the evidence is most conclusive; but it strikes us that we have seldom seen anything more skilfully done than the refutation of Mr. Kelley's argument founded on the deposits in savings banks. Kelley had argued that, because the amount of deposits in savings banks is greater than it was in 1860, it therefore follows that the laboring classes are more prosperous. Mr. Wells does not dispute the fact of increase; but he shows, by exact statislies, precisely what the increase is, and proves that is altogether less than would have accrued from the interest of the money, if the deposits of 1860 had been left without a dollar of addition. If there had not been a single new depositor; if the depositors of 1860 had not put an additional dollar in any savings bank, and had merely left the money then deposited to draw interest, Mr. Wells shows that the amount in the savings banks would be much greater than it is at present. This alone would explode Kelley's reasoning, and turn his facts against him; but Mr. Wells does not let him off so easily. He shows that the motives for making such deposits are much greater, where the laboring classes have been able to make any savings, than it was previous to the war. Mechanics and other thrifty people naturally buy houses and lots so soon as they have accumulated enough to make their first payments. They take their money from the savings banks for this purpose, and use their future earnings to pay off their mortgages. But the price of houses has been so exorbitant of late years as to discourage that kind of investments by the poorer classes: and the consequence is, that nearly all who have had any surplus have deposited it in the savings banks. It follows that the pro-portion of their savings thus deposited is much greater than at any former period. and yet the total deposits are less than they would have been if the amount in 1860 had been left to draw interest, and not a dollar added since. But Mr. Wells does not leave the argument even here. He shows that the depositors in savings banks are no longer confined chiefly to persons in moderate circumstances. The exemption of those institutions from the taxes which fall so heavily upon other species of property, enables their depositors to get better returns than they could from any other form of investment. The consequence is, that a great deal of money takes this direction which formerly went into other channels. Now, if we deduct from the money in savings banks the amount put in by these new classes of depositors, and the amount which has been kept out of houses and lots, and the amount which represents the interest which would have accumulated on the deposits of 1860 in they had not been withdrawn, we shall find, after making these deductions, that the laboring classes have not half the means ahead which they had in 1860, notwithstanding the large growth of population in the intervening period. The conclusion is inevitable that the laboring classes are not nearly so well off as they were eight or nine years ago-a conclusion which is supported by such a variety and accumulation of other facts presented by Mr. Wells as to render doubt absurd and denial

Hands Off.

From the N. Y. Times. The postponement until December of the Reconstruction Committee's bill providing a provisional government for Mississippi is a good sign. The bill is irretrievably bad. It provided for the reassembling of the Convention, whose members were to be invested with the power of appointing a provisional government for the State; and its operation would certainly have been anarchical and rninous. It was a device for putting the offices of the State, high and low, in the hands of adventurers and violent men. Compared with this, military government is far preferable. If the State cannot be at once reconstructed, the best course is to leave it to the laws as they are. Under General Grant's administration they are quite equal to the emergency. It should be some proof of this that he has not suggested further legislation on the subject.

As it is with Mississippi so should it be with Georgia, Virginia, and Texas. The colloquy between Messrs. Sumner, Anthony, and Conkling, the other day, showed that the feeling in favor of leaving things as they are in all the unreconstructed States, and also in Georgia, gains ground in the Senate; and the vote of 103 to 62 on the Mississippi bill indicates the growing strength of moderate opinions in the House. Time will accelerate this tendency, now that the vigorous enforcement of the law is no longer in doubt.

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