

SPRIT OF THE PRESS.

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

MR. MOTLEY IN ENGLAND.

From the N. Y. World. It is pretty clear, from the tone of the English journals in commenting upon the recent speech of Mr. Sumner concerning the Alabama claim, that Mr. Motley will be treated as a guest to sit on the saddle of mutton and put his feet in the soup tureen, nobody would object to his doing so.

This somewhat violent figure of speech hardly exaggerates the tolerance—the more tolerance, the cordially—extended to Mr. Johnson as a diner-out by all England. Of course, we all understood that this gushing temper of our cousins expressed not only their appreciation of the social merits of Mr. Johnson as a man, but their eagerness to make friends with the dead past with Mr. Johnson's countrymen.

The rejection of the Johnson-Stanley treaty by the American Senate will infallibly change all this. It is all very well for Lord Clarendon to get up and pretend that he has private assurances to the effect that the treaty was rejected at Washington only for a political purpose. Lord Clarendon knows better. The English press know better. The instinct of the English people will teach them better.

Mr. Motley, whose chief claim to his appointment (apart from the fact that it would embitter sorely the retirement of Mr. Seward at Auburn) seems to have been a notion that he would have peculiar social advantages in England, will find the face of English society set against him. He will be civilly treated, of course. But all Englishmen who respect themselves will feel that to show any extraordinary courtesy to him would be to humiliate their country before a rival nation which has just taken the plainest possible way of signifying its deep distrust of English statesmanship, if not its positive hostility to England.

SPANISH WARFARE.

From the N. Y. Tribune. Should the report be confirmed that Count Valmaseda, commander of the Spanish forces in the Eastern Department of Cuba, has actually issued the proclamation that came last week by telegraph, the fact will do more than could anything else not only to alienate the sympathies of the world from Spain and warm all hearts towards her insurgent foes, but to dash the young hope of her own resurrection. According to that proclamation, every native male over fifteen years of age, found away from his residence without sufficient cause, is to be executed. Every uninhabited dwelling, and every inhabited dwelling where a white flag shall be undisplayed, is to be burned. All women, absent from their homes, must come to Bayamo or Jiguaní; if they do not come of their own free choice, they will be forced to come. This is simply barbarous. It is war in the old brutal style; war against all the modern principles of war; war as it was conducted in the Middle Ages. It is an insult to the policy of Philip II. The barbarity is marked by that characteristic of utter contempt for the subject which signalized the operations of that most Catholic prince. We have been trying hard of late to think well of Spain, hoping sometimes against hope. We have read over again her history with kindly eyes; we have made generous allowance for her difficulties; we have pitied her sorrows, cheered her endeavors, put the most charitable construction on her blunders, estimated at their full value her national qualities, thrust forward boldly the promising features in her new efforts at administration, praised her Ministers, borne witness to the good conduct of her people, hailed with enthusiasm every indication of improvement in her civil system, greeted with hearty thanks her aspirations after liberty of thought, worship, and speech, bespoken for her the indignance of the public opinion, and maintained a stout conviction that her painful travail would issue in her deliverance from the ancient thralldom of tradition, and in a moment, she turns upon us and bids us believe ourselves grievously mistaken. She is the same old Spain her calumniators, as we thought them, declared her to be—haughty, supercilious, cruel, reckless, scornful of the opinion and the feeling of the civilized world.

MR. PUNCH AND MR. JOHNSON.

From the N. Y. Times. "Mr. Punch hopes," says the organ of that estimable humorist, "that something in the shape of an English tribute will be offered to that kind-hearted gentleman, Mr. Reverdy Johnson, before he is allowed to go away. He has been assiduously doing his best to create the international sympathy which we desire to believe exists; and if ever a man came under the provision of the beatitude about peace-makers, Mr. Johnson is the man." This is the kindest—we might almost say the only kindly—public notice from his English friends which Minister Johnson has received. It is remarkable that, while he has been overflowing with good words, fraternal pledges, and generous prayers for the prosperity of England, he has in return received rather less thanks, or even acknowledgment, than a gruffer ambassador is wont to secure.

Take, for example, Mr. Roebuck's case. That gentleman certainly could not have felt aggrieved had the American Minister refused to cultivate his acquaintance. But what was the fact? Mr. Johnson saw him afar off—even from London to Sheffield—ran to him, and metaphorically if not literally fell on his neck and kissed him. Instead, however, of accepting the role of repentant prodigal, Mr. Roebuck, at the banquet which Mr. Johnson said he would have attended even for his sake alone, abused and vilified the American people; a few days later, in a public speech, he expressed the desire to see America torn asunder; and yet a few months later, he gave his countrymen this dying legacy, "Beware of America." And this will stand very well for one example of fifty of the reception Mr. Johnson's courtesies have met. They have been almost uniformly, and often rudely, rebuffed. The English press has joined in a common cry against him, even the *Edinburgh Review* now taking up the refrain. His desire "to create international sympathy" has been described as "soft sawder," "soft soap," and, at best, "soft sentiment." Now, while it was very well for the American public to resent what we justly considered their Envoy's misapprehension of their feelings, it is quite a different matter for the British public to sneer at his friendly manifestations as either insincere or maudlin. Mr. Johnson has made sad mistakes, but not on the side of insincerity, since he evidently believes what he says. "Mr. Punch," therefore, does a fair thing when he demands for Mr. Johnson "kind regards tied up in a large parcel." The duty of rebuking Mr. Johnson for over-demonstrativeness is not an English duty; and, indeed, we shall not be surprised if, when he really leaves English shores, he obtains a more generous token of appreciation than hitherto from those whom he sought to please, even at the cost of mortally offending his own countrymen.

THE QUESTION OF CUBAN RECOGNITION AT THE STATE DEPARTMENT.

From the N. Y. Herald. According to the Washington correspondents, Mr. Secretary Fish has been venturing a little the question of recognizing the belligerent rights of the Cubans. He was brought to heel by the report that the British Government contemplated such recognition as a good stroke of policy for the purpose of establishing British influence and promoting commerce with Cuba, and, in a measure, to head off the United States there. Mr. Fish has no information to confirm such a report, and thinks such action on the part of England

not at all probable. Our Government, it is said—that is Mr. Fish, we suppose—believes that the British Government would not be likely to take any step that would bring it into collision with Spain or any other European power while the Alabama claims remain suspended over it. Then, it is said, so far from drawing the recognition of Cuban belligerent rights by England, he would regard it as a favorable circumstance, and calculated to lead to the early acquisition of Cuba by this country and the injury of British commerce.

A CHANGE OF CABINET THE ONLY SAFETY FOR THE ADMINISTRATION.

From the N. Y. Herald. When General Grant commanded the armies of the Union, victory perched upon his banners, because no man had the right to question his acts or demand his purposes. But the Presidency is a different thing. Congress has reduced it to a mere second mate's position, and every party leader who controls a section in Congress claims the right to issue orders and to know all the plans. To make matters still worse, these political section masters are not agreed among themselves. Each is jealous of his competitors, and the result is confusion. The Washington dispatches all agree that there is much dissatisfaction among the politicians there, and the Western newspapers are beginning to find fault with the President for this state of things. There is ground for complaint, and it lies in the fact that the recognized head of the Cabinet, though a very worthy gentleman of the old school, is entirely unfitted by his ideas, habits, and tastes for the post he fills.

The fact is, General Grant is not a politician and does not wish to become one. He fought many splendid battles and won great victories, for which a grateful people have elected him to the first office in their gift, and are willing to pass over his shortcomings. He cannot at this time take hold in an entirely new field and become a great worker, and his disposition, therefore, is to let matters take their course in Cabinet council. He has no foreign or domestic policy to urge, no plans to carry out, no ambitious designs to foster, and therefore he has consented in those he has called around him. But for this very reason he should have the strongest possible Cabinet he can construct. This would be the best evidence that he entertains a lively interest in the welfare of the nation, and a signal return for the confidence reposed in him. It is admitted on all sides that the present leader of the Cabinet is not up with the ideas of the time, and though eminently respectable and desirous to do all that lies in his power, he holds no grasp on the heart of the country, and is incapable of marking out and carrying into execution a policy for the administration.

The President, therefore, should not court disaster by procrastination and unseemly delay. The voices from the East and from the West are signs of the rising spirit of the times, and must be heeded if we would not invite defeat. The unanimity with which the Senate and the whole country have responded to Mr. Sumner's recent masterly utterances on our foreign policy points to him as the best man to place in the position of Secretary of State and at the head of the Cabinet; and reconstruction of the Government should at once be made, not only by calling him to office, but also by consulting him as to the persons who may be called to hold the other portfolios. With Mr. Sumner in lead as the working man of the administration, the President can feel a confidence that no gross mistakes will be committed like those of waiting to know what England says before we decide upon our policy in the Cuban question, or drawing up the instructions of Minister Motley; and without taking upon himself the supervision of every step in foreign or domestic affairs, he may be sure that his administration will not stand before the country convicted of incapacity and meritorious defeat.

THE INTERVIEW BETWEEN PRESIDENT GRANT AND GENERAL LEE.

From the N. Y. World. If it be true that the consultation between these distinguished chieftains, on Saturday, took place at the request of the President, and that his purpose was to avail himself of General Lee's advice respecting the steps most suitable to be taken for restoring Virginia to our Federal relations, it is the most judicious and creditable thing which General Grant has done since his accession to office. General Lee is doubtless better acquainted with the actual public sentiment of Virginia than any other man in the State; and the measures which the President may adopt will be successful just in proportion as they accord with, and are supported by, that public sentiment. To proceed intelligently, he must know what the people will consent to; and an officer in quest of correct information acts sensibly in applying to the man whose name is so widely known where it is to be had. All men of real intelligence in Virginia are in the habit of expressing themselves to General Lee with the most entire unreserve, and he is a better judge than any other man in the State of the co-operation or the opposition which any particular course of policy would meet from the great body of its respectable citizens. A previous consultation with General Lee ought to prove valuable on other grounds, besides being the most authentic source of information. So great is the confidence which he enjoys in that State, that whatever advice or assurance will be likely to revive the spirit of resistance to large and most influential class of citizens who hold his judgment and character in respect. Whatever President Grant attempts in Virginia with their co-operation cannot very well fail.

The fundamental mistake which the radical party have made throughout the whole progress of the reconstruction controversy, has consisted in spurning the advice and assistance of the representative men of the South. Had it not been for their bigotry in this respect, all questions could have been settled immediately after the close of the war, and the country have been spared these four trying years of distraction and turmoil. The fact that these representative men had been stepped in the Rebellion, so far from being a valid reason why the Government should not have arranged terms with them, was the strongest reason for doing so. The whole Southern people had supported the Rebellion, and there was no way of reclaiming them by loyalty so short, simple, and easy as by negotiating through the leaders whose moral ascendancy it was impossible to destroy. The sentimental repugnance to utilizing the leaders of the Rebellion ought to have weighed no more against arranging the terms of a political, than it did in arranging the terms of a military surrender. Why did the war end all at once, and completely, every Rebel soldier laying down his arms and returning to his home to act the part of a peaceful citizen? Why was there no necessity for dealing with any recalcitrant military remnants or of the Rebellion in detail? It was because the Confederate armies respected the authority of their generals, and were willing to be bound by their engagements. The consent of three men sufficed to disarm and scatter all the Rebel

hosts. General Lee, General Johnston, and General Dick Taylor carried the proxies of their respective armies. There was no necessity for treating immediately with the armies themselves; the surrender of these generals included the surrender of all the men whom they commanded. A similar course ought to have been adopted in dealing with the political problem. The Southern people would have promptly complied with any conditions which had received the assent of their recognized leaders. Instead of the cumbersome method, which was actually adopted, of dealing with the whole Southern people as an unorganized mass of individuals, and operating through carpet-baggers whom they despised, and whom they would never consent to follow, the method which suited the circumstances was to arrange terms with the natural leaders of the South, and trust to their ascendancy over their followers for bringing over the great body of the people. Had this course been pursued, the controversy might have been settled at once; confidence and kindness would have been immediately restored; and the South would have had no difficulty in borrowing the capital which was needed for the resuscitation of its prostrate industry.

In a war between two nations foreign to each other, there is no delay or difficulty in closing up the controversy after the final cessation of hostilities. The reason is, that each nation considers itself bound by the action of its government, and the conditions to which its rulers assent in a treaty of peace are observed without question by all the people. If, instead of possessing this convenient machinery of settlement, two nations were completely disorganized at the close of the war, it is difficult to see how a controversy between them could ever reach a stable adjustment. If on the very day of the war should refuse to treat with the government of the other, and undertake to arrange a settlement with the great body of its people, the dispute would drag on through an era of confusion as the reconstruction question has in this country. The reconstruction controversy could have been arranged with nearly as much certainty and satisfaction by an understanding with the recognized leaders of Southern opinion, as by a treaty with a government, if there had been a government in the South with authority to command the obedience of the people. By disfranchising, humiliating, and spurning all the men of real influence, and attempting to control the people through intruders whom they detested, the South has been converted into a political chaos for a period of four years.

If President Grant has really invited General Lee to Washington to confer with him on the state of affairs in Virginia, he is exhibiting the first gleam of sense which has yet been manifested in dealing with the reconstruction question. The influence of such men as General Lee, the ascendancy of such men over the party sentiment of their section, cannot be annihilated or weakened by anything which the Republican party is able to do. It will continue to exist and operate as a potent political force; and it depends upon the wisdom of the Government whether it shall be an obstruction or an aid. If President Grant has concluded to ascertain and conform to the best public sentiment of Virginia, he may reasonably hope that the new State Government, when once organized, will be self-sustaining. No government which requires an outside military force to uphold it can be considered as republican. In a government truly republican, the chief sanction of the laws is a supporting public opinion; and if General Grant desires to see governments of this character in the Southern States, he must put himself in relations with those Southern men whose antecedents and standing make them the natural leaders of the people.

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