## SPIRIT OF THE PRESS.

Editorial Opinions of the Leading Journals Upon Current Topics Compiled Every Day for the Evening Telegraph.

GOVERNMENT AND THE TELEGRAPH.

From the N. Y. Times. The bill enabling the British Government to acquire possession of the telegraphs has become law. As soon as the necessary arrangements are perfected, the various lines in the United Kingdom will pass under the management of the Post Office Department.

This result has not been reached without prolonged effort and vigorous opposition. Until now the British telegraphic system has been identical with that which still exists here. The service was in the hands of private companies, whose charges and general manage ment excited discontent among the mercantile

Their complaints led the Postmaster-General to institute inquiries into the working of the postal telegraph system adopted on the Continent, and conducted with admirable precision and success by the governments of France, Belgium, and Switzerland. The conclusion officially arrived at was favorable to the acquisition of control by the Govern-ment, and the incorporation of the management with that of the Post Office, "Under the existing system," it was reported, "the development of telegraphic correspondence has been retarded," while under government direction" the growth of such correspondence has greatly stimulated in Belgium and Switzerland." The opinion was expressed that like results would follow the change in Englandthat "from the annexation of the telegraph to the Post Office would accrue great advantage to the public, and ultimately a large revenue to the State." This was in 1866. Two years after the subject again occupied the attention of the Post Office Department, and assumed definite shape in the House of Commons. Statement and counter-statement, argument and reply, were heard by a committee, and the first step was taken with the measure which on Tuesday last received the Queen's The delay has proved costly to the British

Treasury. The earliest estimate of the cost of purchasing the various lines was £2,500,000 sterling, which by a supplementary estimate was raised to £3,000,000. The telegraph companies, however, claimed higher prices, which were still further swollen on ac count of reversionary rights owned by railway companies. Negotiations were opened which ended in the adjustment of a basis for the proposed purchase. The leading telegraph lines are to be bought up at twenty years' purchase on their receipts of 1868-an excessive rate of valuation for the plant and good-will of a commercial enterprise, and one which seems to have been accepted by the Parliamentary Committee in ignorance of its probable amount. In some instances the compensation allowed is exceptionally exorbitant. Thus, one company, not content with twenty years' profits, has secured twenty years' purchase of the probable annual increase of profits in addition to the market value of its shares. A total valuation which at first was computed at £2,500,000 has grown to £7,000,000 sterling—the sum provided by Parliament. It is not surprising that the prospect of this extravagant bargain has acted like magic upon the market price of many of the shares. For example, the Electric and International Company's shares have risen from £153 to £255, and the premium on Reuter's shares has been multiplied nine

The terms of the bargain, however, are a matter of detail which in no way affects the merits of the policy on which the Government has proceeded. Whether it pays more or less than the precise value of the lines acquired is a question to be convidered in connection with the immediate business profit of the transaction, but it leaves untouched the principle that underlies the junction of the telegraphic with the postal service.

The two services are in their nature identical. Telegraphic messages are a form of correspondence. They are letters flashed with the speed of lightning. If the Government may properly carry letters, it may with equal propriety convey telegraphic despatches. In both instances it acts as the great mailcarrier for the people.

But the Government conducts the Post Office business by more than a permissive right. The service it renders in this respect is one which nothing less than a governmental organization may be relied upon to perform. The postal system is in some particulars more perfect in England than here; but neither here nor there could it be conducted with a tithe of the certainty and efficiency, or at the same rate, by any other agency. Public opinion would revolt against a scheme for surrendering the work of the Postal Department to railroad or express conspanies, because the change would subject the service to the greed and caprice of corporations conducted solely with a view to their own profit. The performance of the service by the Government does not always imply a monopoly of that service. But the country would feel that its rights were better cared for and its interests more fully respected by the concentration of postal privileges in the hands of Government than by any guarantees which private corporations could afford.

Exactly the same considerations apply to the telegraph. We have no desire to undervalue the accommodation afforded by the companies whose wires cover the continent as with a net. Their enterprise has accomplished much. But it were folly to pretend that they have made the conveyance of messages as efficient as it can be made. Judging of it only by what we see here, it is a great convenience. But judged by the system which European governments have developed, it is in almost all respects unsatisfactory. Its rates are extravagant, and the facilities it affords are inconsiderable in comparison with those which might be afforded by

postal management. The leading recommendations of the postal telegraph are cheapness, uniformity of charges, and what may be termed the universality of its machinery. Every post office on the routes traversed by telegraphs is a station for the receipt, transmission, and distribution of messages. Telegraphic facilities on these routes are thus made co-extensive with those for the postal system. And the charge for the service performed is irrespective of distance. The same reasoning which justifies the conveyance of a letter regardless of distance, indicates the expediency of transmitting a telegraphic desbatch wherever the arrangements of the Post Office extend at a uniform rate. The British government intends to charge a uniform rate of one shilling, and moreover to so extend the telegraph that it shall reach every money-order office in the kingdom. It is be lieved that in less than three years the rate may be reduced to sixpence. Were this country to adopt the same system, we might hope

for a uniform charge of twenty-five cents, or | been 4s per cent-the highest and most | even less.

Cheap telegraphs, like cheap letters, do not involve permanent loss to the Government. The penny postage system in England is a source of profit. And in Belgium and Switzerland, with low and uniform rates, the reccipts of the telegraph have already more than covered the cost of construction and management. There seems no reason to doubt the realization of a similar result in England, or in this country, when public opinion shall have ripened for the change.

RECENT SOUTHERN ELECTIONS.

From the N. Y. Tribune.

The Senter Republicans of Tennessee are not so jolly as they had hoped to be. Their "Conservative" allies proved not only more ruinous but more exacting than they had anticipated. Though there was no outright bargain, it was clearly understood by those Republicans that enfranchisement was all that the "Conservatives" were to ask or claim at this election—that, this being secured, they would vote not only for Senter but for especial friends for the Legislature. At the last moment, however, "Conservative" candidates for the Legislature were nominated—or voted for without having been openly nominatedand most of them easily elected over the divided and conflicting Republicans. The Senter Republicans have therefore carried Senter: the "Conservatives" have clutched nearly everything else. And there is, naturally, some hard feeling on the subject.

Gen, Grant had 56,757 votes in the State last fall; and these would have been about equally divided on Governor; but the later developments of "Conservative" avidity probably changed some thousands of these from Senter to Stokes, who thus received some 30,000 to 40,000 votes. Senter's vote will probably reach 100,000, made up nearly as follows:-

Republicans. Seymour voters last year......25,000

Newly enfranchised..... The "conservatives" have won a triumph too sweeping to be secure. Already, some of the old Rebel oracles begin to talk of "a white man's government," and an open alliance on that platform with the Northern Democracy. They will doubtless so manage as to unite and invigorate the Republicans at an early day; but this they think they can By our estimate they are 80,000

The former are not likely to ignore this disparity. There you see the effect of Rebel enfran-

strong; while the Republicans are but 60,000,

chisement!" says a Stokes man. Certainly. It would doubtless have been wiser in the Republicans to enfranchise the Rebels by a generous act of amnesty than to let them enfranchise themselves, as, by Senter's help, they have just done. There is always a right way to do whatever needs doing; and taking another way, or letting it be taken, involves trouble.

But the champions of wholesale, indefinite proscription persistently shut their eyes to controlling facts. They talk as though a pyramid would stand on its apex forever: but it won't. Had Seymour been elected last fall, the conservatives would have enfranchised themselves by the shortest way, law or no law. There would probably have been collision and a season of anarchy—possibly of bloodshed but they would have been voters in the end. They have now attained that end in a better way, though not the best. The last Legislature should have enfranchised at least the better half of them.

-Virginia seems quietly awaiting General Canby's official declaration of the result of her late struggle. If there are complaints that any have been proscribed, or ejected | One thing, however, is certain: no European from their tenements, or turned off by their employers for voting as they chose last month we do not hear them. But we do hear that General Canby persists in his purpose of exacting the iron-clad oath of every member of the new Legislature, and deeply regret it. We see no end to be achieved by it but that of converting the triumphant Walker party into an anti-administration party and embit tering the political fends of Virginia for years to come. If the effect be to deprive the majority of United States Senators and enable the minority to elect them, the wrong will be greater and the blunder more fatal. We must cherish the hope that General Cauby will yet be induced "to accept the situation" as fully, if not so heartily, as the late Rebels appear to

have done. Alabama has just witnessed a straight forward party contest: and there the Repub licans have traumphed, choosing four of the six Representatives in Congress. One of the Democrats chosen is Peter M. Dox, well known in the politics of our State, first as a Whig, then as a "Silver Gray, lastly as a pro-slavery "Democrat." (N. B.—"Carpet baggers" are not obnoxious at the South unless they are Republicans; then they are, We trust that Colonel Dox may be able to take the iron-clad oath, as it don't require him to swear that he wished the Rebels de feated in the late unpleasantness.

-We hope soon to hear that the Republi cans of the South have everywhere discarded the policy of proscribing or disfranchising the late Rebels. True, they may be beaten by the votes now nullified by this policy; but triumphs won by confining the suffrage practically to one party are fragile and illusory, as Andrew Johnson found when he made Ten nessee vote for Lincoln and himself in '61as Colonel Stokes has just discovered. The only safe and solid ground to stand on is that of all rights for all.

OUR PROTECTION-RUINED CHINA TRADE.

The organs of protection do not like the World's exposure of the rain they have brought upon the manufacturing interests of the country by shutting American goods out of foreign markets and making exports unprofitable and impossible. They chafe most sorely under the exposure of the poverty of our fabric export trade with China, which we deluge with our gold and silver to pay for the tens and silks we consume, instead of paying, as we might but for the tariff, with the handiwork of American men and women.

We used to send cotton fabrics to China in our tea ships; why none now? The Tribune essays to answer by the statement that "our large export to China of drillings and other substantial cotton fabrics grew up and flourished under the stringent protection afforded to our cotton manufactures by the tariffs of 1816, 1824, 1828, and 1842-\* \* under duties more protective, all things considered, than those now in operation.'

Mr. Greeley, like most protectionists, is as precisely wrong in his facts as in his reasoning. Duties are higher now than then, and argument, if it could prove anything, should prove that our export trade to China ought to be immensely increased by the present tariff instead of ruined as it is.

The tariff of 1816 averaged 27 per cent. The tariff of 1824 averaged 37 per cent. The tariff of 1828 averaged 44 per cent.

palmy tariff of all. Yet these are not the high and palmy days of our China trade,

Mr. Greeley alleges another bogus reasonthe war for the Union, upon which "all our energies and means were concentrated." is doubtless true that his loyal brethren, who denounced everybody but themselves as traitors, preferred selling shoddy to the Government at a swindling profit, and co-operating with men like Mr. Greeley's esteemed and respected Sickles to cheat the Government at both ends of every bargain, to selling goods to Chinamen full weight, measure, and quality for an honou price, Their shoddy cyalty paid better than legitimate trade; but Mr. Greeley ought to know that the China trade, if profitable, would still have been carried on, but the tariff, which he would verily increase to protect American tea-growing

soon made our export trade impossible. One more bogus reason alleged is that our foreign commerce was given to the flames by Great Britain's Alabamas, Orefos, and Shenandoahs. That was certainly in part a valid reason for a time; it is not a valid reason, five years after the Rebel craisers have ceased to exist, why we are unable to manufacture and export to China 600,000 or 700,000 pieces of drill and a million pieces of other cotton fabrics. But the protective tariff has made an export trade impossible, and the Tribe. has as little sense as ever it had of the crime of lashing popular passions into fary and provoking civil or foreign wars.

"But our loss is partly caused, also, by the continued inflation of the currency. One ounce of truth in a bushel of bubble. But who created, who inflated this irredeemable currency, and who now make specie payments as impossible as an export trade to China? You, the Tribune; you, the Republican party. With your high tariff men in combination to enrich the rings, you passed the legal-tender act—an act as lawless as your military commissions, and senseless as your management of the war. You defended it, and denounced the World as disloyal for denouncing it. The successive inflations which we have protested against you have paltered over or openly approved. Having absolute power, you created this wretched currency and inflated it from worse to worse, and are now confessedly responsible for all the ruin which it has contributed to wreak upon our export trade with China and the rest of the world,

THE CONSPIRACY AGAINST REPUBLI-CANISM.

From the N. Y. Sun. Mr. Roberts, the Spanish Minister, indoctrinated by the Bonaparte Legation at Washington; Mr. Thornton, the British Minister, waiting like Micawber for something to turn up; and Mr. Hamilton Fish, gravely pondering over this coalition of Serrano, Bonaparte. and Clarendon against American republicanism, whether the scene of it be laid in the United States, in Peru, in Cuba, or in Mexico-all these personages, taken together, now present a somewhat grotesque spectacle.

Considering the demoralized condition of Serrano's Government, and the waning prestige of Napoleon's empire, the desperate attempts of these rulers to wield or retain a power on the American continent which is slipping from their fingers in the Old World should produce in this country nothing but a feeling of contempt and derision, if it were not for the fact that the welfare of our sister republies is put in danger by these intriguers of La Granja and the Tuileries.

To what extent the agents of Bonaparte and Clarendon will be permitted to poke their noses into matters in which they are not authorized to intermeddle, remains to be seen. Government would for one n the importinent interference which the Ame rican Government countenances so foolishly on the part of representatives of Old World powers in the United States.

It must also be borne in mind that the Secretary of State has not far to go to find lawyers who, although they are not officially connected with the administration, are but too happy to give a lift to that Old World despotism which they would fain see established in this part of the globe. These lawyers, under the plausible cover of a distinguished professional reputation, impose upon the good nature and ductile spirit of Mr. Fish, and thus exert a kind of magnetic influence over his decisions, the painful effect of which has been apparent more than once.

Mr. Roberts, too, is unsparing in his efforts to bring professional influence to bear upon the American government; while the Sonapartist agents are only continuing the kind of work which Louis Napoleon initiated at the time of his invasion of the Mexican republic. By playing into the hands of Spain in regard to Peru and Cuba, Louis Napoleon is well aware that he strengthens the chain of slavery and checks the progress of republican principles. With so high an occasion for the exercise of his zeal, who can wonder at the activity of his agents, or at their sinister coalition with the emissaries of Serrano?

THE MEN OF THE SECOND EMPIRE PASSING AWAY.

From the N. Y. Herald. All men are mortal, and the men of the mpire proclaimed in France on the 2d day of December, 1852, cannot escape the universal w. One after another of the leading conederates of Charles Louis Napoleon Bonaparte n establishing that empire on the ruins of the republic of 1848 have been successively passing away, until the Emperor, who is himelf reported as sick by the cable telegram of Thursday, is left almost alone. Marshal de St. Arnaud, Marshal Pelissier (Duke de Malakoff), the Duke de Morny, Cemte de Walewski, Minister Fould, Secretary Mocquard, and a dozen other conpicuous imperialists have had to leave al their fresh-blown dignities and die. Marshal Niel, who has been as blind a devotee to Napoleonic ideas as any of his contemporaries, and whose superior military talents have shed more lustre on the reign of Napoleon III than it has derived from any other source. died on Saturday. It remains to be seen whether the successors of the original military and civil advisers and aids of the Emperor will co-operate with him in strengthening his dynasty by gradually fulfilling his promise and the desire of the French people and "crowning the edifice with iberty. The peace of Europe as well as the prosperity of France largely depend not only on the will of Napoleon, but on the character of the men whom he shall select to replace his confidents of 1852.

GENERAL GRANT'S AMBITION.

From the N. Y. Herald. General Grant, not long before he entered the White House, said he would rather be the Mayor of Galena—the town of his former residence—than be President, meaning, as we suppose, that his highest ambition was to be useful in a comparatively limited sphere. We give him due credit for that, believing he is patriotic and desirous of doing the best he The tariff of 1842 averaged 35 per cent.
But the average tariff for five years past has pression shows, too, that he had an humble

opinion of himself. While we can admire his modesty, we think he underestimated his ability. As a military man he showed great capacity-showed, in fact, that his mind developed according to the exigencies of the service, and that it was equal to the most trying circumstances. If he would lift himself out of the mire of party politics and the trammels of the party politicians that surround him, he might become as distinguished in his present high office as he was in the war. Though he might not have desired the Presidency, and may not want to have it another term, his ambition to be useful may be gratified far more in his present position than if he were Mayor of Galena. Will the President, as he intended when he first entered upon his duties, enuncipate himself from the schemes of party politicians and adapt his policy to the conservative sentiment of the country? The reign of radicalism was an abnormal condition of things. It cannot endure, If General Grant be wise he will see this, and pursue a course in consonance with public opinion and the interests of the country.

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