SPIRIT OF THE PRESS.

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

SPECTACULAR STATESMANSHIP AND

LAW. From the N. Y. World.

President Grant has again found his ignorance of the law an impediment in carrying out the policy announced in his inaugural of executing all laws, good or bad, and in fulfilling his oath of office to the same effect. He stumbled over that ignorance in nominating Mr. Stewart to be Secretary of the Treasury, when a Federal statute forbade such an appointment. Stumbling thus and falling, he called on Congress to pick him up and set him on his feet again by repealing the statute which he was violating.

He has stumbled and fallen again over his ignorance. His order to Marshal Barlow to hold the prisoner Pratt "at any cost" disclosed that ignorance in all its proportions. Had Congress been in session, doubtless that body would have been invoked to set the President on his legs again by an act conforming the law to his ignorance, and ordaining that an offense committed in the United States can be tried elsewhere than in the district where committed, or if committed on the high seas, elsewhere than in the port or district into which the prisoner is first brought. Whether Burr or Grant most disgraced us might then be left to the decision of a military commission. But Congress was not in session to be called on to back up Grant and set him on his legs again, and so he has had to be content with the performance of that service by District Attorney Pierrepont and United States Commissioner Osborne. They have

done it with spectacular effect. The plea of District Attorney Pierrepont was a farce, decorously performed, we must admit; the whole trial before United States Commissioner Osborne was a sham, and, as in most mock trials, the business was a little overdone by the presiding officer. The purpose of the sham was to conceal from general observation that President Grant had again stumbled and was prostrate, waiting to be set up again for our homage in the chair of state.

For District Attorney Pierrepont must have known, from the beginning of the Pratt business to the denouement into which he conducted it so ingeniously and as piously as if he had been a son of Noah; and United States Commissioner Osborne must have learned over Sunday, if no earlier, under the tuition of the Chambers street stage manager, that an offense committed in the United States can be tried only in the district where committed. The reason of the law is to prevent the Government from marching a prisoner about to select a district favorable to a conviction. But the warrant of the Commissioner affirmed that Pratt's offenses were all done in the district or State of Texas. In his Sunday-schooling, Commissioner Osborne was doubtless informed that those offenses were therefore triable in that State or district, and nowhere else in this solar system. He was doubtless instructed. also, that no commissioner, magistrate, judge, or court in New York had the legal right to initiate the arrest of Pratt; that the starting point was Texas, and the proper of proceeding was for the manner United States to procure an indictment against the accused in that State, and on it demand his extradition from the Governor of New York; that on the extradition the sole inquiry would be the identity of the person charged in the indictment with the person sought to be removed. Stage-Manager Pierreport, moreover, before putting the court through its rehearsals, must have had to disclose to Osborne not only his own blunders, but also the blunders of the military noodles at Texas and in Washington, who, instead of pursuing the above-mentioned customary and legal course, sent a detective after Pratt, who finds him in New York, eight months after his alleged offense, who has no personal knowledge thereof except heresay, which is not competent evidence, yet thereupon makes a complaint and gets from Osborne the warrant, perhaps promising him more evidence on the examination, but certainly offering no legal proof-and no evidence but what went to show that Osborne had no jurisdiction over the offense even if committed by Pratt.

There must have been a dress rehearsal-Osborne went through the last act of this spectacular drama so glibly. We can fancy District Attorney, or rather Director, Pierrepont bringing the court into a proper docility by informing Mr. Osborne that, whatever his name, grade, or rank in the system of Federal judicature—nay, not even though he were Justice Nelson himself in his robes and his lion's mane, instead of being endowed with a quite different apparel and authority, had he rightful power in the premises to arrest and hold Pratt; and, as the court resisted and cited Booth's case and the decision therein of Chief Justice Taney, doubtless the index finger of the manager arose, and Mr. Osborne was taught that, as against the jurisdiction of a State judge issuing a writ of habeas corpus to bring Pratt before him, it was preposterous to allege that for preventing inquiry whether, under the Federal laws, admitting the guilt of the accused to be as laid, he (Osborne) had any jurisdiction; and, if none, then his warrant to Barlow conveyed to him no authority or protection.

We hear the exasperated stage manager saying:- "Suppose it admitted that you were not a commissioner when you issued the warrant, is a State judge prevented by the ghost of Taney from taking notice of that admission? Suppose it admitted on all sides that, being a commissioner for this district, you have no jurisdiction over the case of this murderer of Texas, must a State judge shut his eyes to the admission; and what difference can he know between want of jurisdiction admitted or want of jurisdiction proved incontestably? Of course, had Congress clearly given you jurisdiction in words, a State judge ought not to divest that jurisdiction upon the ground that the words were unconstitutional.

When the Managing Director had his pupil sufficiently humbled, he doubtless then disclosed to him how much safer for him it was, and how essential to the disordered dignity of Grant it was, that the Court should go on, instead of retreating, and proceed to exercise the jurisdiction that it had usurped.

One dress-rehearsal of this sham, along with the consciousness that he was contributing to rescue the President from a position worse even than that of Barlow environed with artillery in his public and his most private business, probably sufficed for the United States Commissioner. The declamation may have been a little overdone where he said "that the prisoner was legally in his jurisdiction without a doubt, and were the same information furnished to him again he would issue another warrant, and do it repeatedly;" but something is to be forgiven to these amateur theatricals, and we must remember that to save his superior's dignity it was necessary to sacrifice all his own.

After District Attorney-we beg pardonafter Mr. Managing Director Pierrepont had | Grant.

delivered his carefully irrelevant eloquence, and had declared, with an energy which would | From the N. F. Tribune. have done credit to Forrest in "Jack Cade," that "the debate commenced at Fort Sumter in 1861 and closed at Appomattox Court House in 1865" was now the supreme law in any question of Federal or State jurisdiction; and after he had gone through his part of presenting a witness who swore to nothing in point, and papers which he regretted were inadmissible as evidence, and telegraphic despatches of which the court could take no cognizance, the way was handsomely prepared

for the Commissioner and the cue given. The Court did not forget its part; jurisdic tion was claimed and exercised for the purpose of letting the Texan murderer go free; and the sacrifice of law, personal honor, and of the dignity and repute of a court being thus complete, in the background appeared the upright figure of President Grant, sitting in reconstructed dignity in his chair of state, with only a little dirt upon his clothes where he had fallen, slowly ascending amid the blaze of Bengal lights held aloft by Barlow, Jackson, and Purdy, and with the United States Dis trict Attorney and the United States Commissioner lifting up their shining faces and crying, "Saved—at any cost."

THE GENERAL MUDDLE AMONG THE POLITICIANS.

From the N. Y. Herald.

It will not be surprising if, from the pre ent general muddle among the politicians parties, and factions of the day, we shall have scrub race, and a very amusing scrub race too, for the Presidential succession. The Democracy of the North are all adrift, the Northern Republicans are wrangling over the split in the party down South, while the Southern Democracy en masse, leaders and followers, from Virginia to Texas, have joined the liberal Southern Republicans in a new party organization on universal suffrage (negroes and all) and a general political amnesty. At the same time in the North, from Massachusetts to Kansas, the temperance people are organizing for independent action in behalf of the suppression of whisky, while the women's rights women are moving heaven and earth in the cause of woman suffrage, and the labor leagues, numbering their members by hundreds of thousands, are inevitably tending to a new political movement as a balance of power between the two great parties of the day, in national and local

It appears, furthermore, that while General Grant may be considered as a candidate for another term, there is at least one member of his Cabinet—the Secretary of the Treasury who aspires to the regular Republican nomination in 1872. Judge Lewis Dent, a candidate for the new Southern liberal party for Governor of Mississippi, in a pungent letter on the subject, flatly says to Mr. Boutwell, You aim to be the next President: in the pursuit of your ambition you are ungrateful and unscrupulous; you have denounced the Southern conservative Republicans who are for Grant, that you may obtain the proscriptive Republicans who are for Boutwell, and by some strange, dexterous management and occult political strategy you have so worked upon the confidence of the President as to cause him to flourish the club with which you intend to break his head, by inducing him to join you in denunciation of the conservative Republicans, created by his magnanimity and triumphant through his encouragement. other words, in cutting this new Southern party, Grant, according to Dent, has been taken in and done for by Boutwell.

It will be remembered, however, that Chase, as Lincoln's Secretary of the Treasury, played a much bolder game for the With the woman it is still worse. If she cuts succession than anything that has yet appeared from Boutwell, but that in the nominating convention Lincoln walked over the course, and Chase was nowhere. Just as easily may President Grant, if now a candidate, supplant his Secretary of the Treasury. It was done with an effort on the part of Lincoln, and can be done without an effort on the part of Grant, even after giving his Secretary all the rope he may desire. This intermeddling of Mr. Boutwell, however, in Southern politics, has been bad in every way. and in any event is no longer wanted; and he will have quite enough to do hereafter in attending to the business of his depart-

According to Judge Dent the Southern conservatives of Virginia and Tennessee are much indebted to Boutwell for their decisive victories. If so, the Chief Justice is no doubt thankful; for, as it appears, he is looking to this new party to lift him a step higher. It is given out that Mr. Chase, soon after the Virginia election, wrote a letter (they always begin by writing letters) to a prominent poli-tician of Tennessee, an old friend of his, wkerein he expressed much gratification at the defeat of the bitter-enders in Virginia and rejoiced over the success of the conservatives: that he was hopeful of similar results in Tennessee, Mississippi, and Texas, and strongly hinted that in his opinion the Republican party had served its day, and that the time was at hand when a new conservative party should be formed, embracing the moderate men of all existing parties. This was a very good idea a year or two ago, but now the question of the reshaping of our political parties for the succession is in the hands of General Grant. His first six months in office signify nothing towards the settlement of this question. On all the great issues of the day he has the whole field still before him, and upon the measures and results of his administration during the next three years the question of the succession will be determined.

Mr. Chase, therefore, is too early in the field with his new party. In the progress of events it may wield the balance of power between the two older parties of the country, or it may be absorbed between them. Rejected by the Northern Democracy and repu-diated by the administration, the chances of this third party are somewhat dubious, and so are the chances of Mr. Chase. He has been unfortunate as a pilgrim for the White House. He had reason to be hopeful from his first experiment as a Republican in 1860; but he showed his hand too soon in 1861, and too soon for the Tammany Democratic Convention of 1868. Those old Copperheads could not understand his brilliant transformation, though Greeley seemed to understand it and admire it. It may be that Greeley is still an admirer of Mr. Chase, He certainly displays a remarkable leaning to this new Southern party. At all events, we apprehend that Mr. Chase is too early in the field with his third party, and that, done for with the Republican party, his association this new movement will only serve to finish him among the Northern Democracy. It was a shrewd remark of old Colonel Dick Johnson, that the Presidency is neither to be sought nor declined; and he who is too hot upon the trail is sure to be thrown off. There may be a chance for the Chief Justice in a scrub race, and if General Grant perseveres in doing nothing we may have a scrub race for the succession open to all comers. The whole question is in the hands of General

THE MORMON QUESTION.

The patience with which decent people have listened to the stories of despotism and license at Salt Lake City for some time past was founded, we dare say, in a great measure upon the conviction that, before the flood of light which the opening of the Pacific Rail-road would pour into the dominions of Brigham Young, the dark superstitions of the Latter Day Saints must speedity break away. The road is open, and already the conflict has begun. There is yet no direct rail com-munication with the Mormon capital, but there soon will be; and meanwhile the locomotive traverses the whole breadth of the Territory of Utah, and stations and "Gentile" settlements are springing up all along its path. It seems impossible that polygamy and absolutism should long withstand the great steam civilizer; but Brigham Young fights hard for his supremacy, and even the Gentiles of Salt Lake City doubt whether he will not succeed in keeping it. The corner-stone of his system is popular ignorance, and the safeguard of ignorance is isolation. A year ago, therefore, he began a crusade for the purpose of drividg out the Gentile merchants and shopkeepers, forbidding his people to have any dealings with them; but the laws of trade were stronger than sermons, and the prophet's commands were never faithfully obeyed. A few months ago Brigham tried another expedient. This was nothing else than the conversion of all the trade of the city into one grand co-operative enterprise, in which of course none but Mormons were to share. The scheme took the form of a revelation, and was instantly put into practice. Individual traders turned their stock into the general concern-most of them of course losing money by the operation-and the organization opened its grocery, dry goods, and hardware shops, all over the settlements. It is too soon yet to judge of the success of the undertaking; but trade is flowing fast into the new channel, and competition is rigidly suppressed. Private persons may sell goods as much as they please, but they must not sell for less than the co-operative shops. The success of this plan would do more

than anything else could do to drive Gentiles out of the Territory and prolong Brigham's lease of power: but we must not forget that the danger to Mormonism is not only in association with a more enlightened population, but in the dissemination of intelligence among the Mormons themselves. The railroad may not bring in shopkeepers; but nothing can prevent its introducing books and newspapers. Our correspondent well remarks that "even the trashiest of yellowcovered novels are dangerous enemies to Mormonism:" and, when the literature of the day is easily procurable, as it is already in Utah, isolation is at an end. Put these people face to face with the opinions of mankind, bring them into sympathy with the progress of the rest of the world, and they will no longer feel that they are set apart from all the race, and can submit to a tyranny or revel in a loathsome practice at which civilized nations lift up their hands in horror. Perhaps it is upon the women that the book, the newspaper, the magazine, will have the quickest effect; and so the first modifications of the Mormon tyranny will spring from their resistance. Yet, even with the destruction of the prophet's supremacy, which we can hardly think far distant, a sud den overthrow of polygamy cannot be expected. The man who has two wives is a lave bound forever to the Mormon system. He cannot leave the Territory, and be cannot eave the Church. He must bear for life the burden of superstition which he has taken upon his shoulders. herself loose from the creed which she may have learned to hate, every respectable door is closed against her, and life is shameful and hopeless. The saints, we suppose, must dwindle away where they are, and Mormonism must die out rather than break to pieces. But the despotism of Brigham's government cannot long survive the influence of the railroad; and when that goes the new generation of believers will grow up with thoughts and customs very different from those of their

rational. THE PRESIDENT NO MAN'S MASTER.

ancestors. Mormonism then will cease to

be disgusting, though it may not become

From the N. Y. Sun. Judge Lewis Dent, brother-in-law of Presi dent Grant, and candidate for Governor of Mississippi, doesn't like Secretary Boutwell, and has written a letter to abuse him. This is all right. Mr. Boutwell is a statesman, a patriot, and an honest man. Dent is an adventurer looking for anything to turn up, and anxious to run for Governor of Mississippi under false pretenses, claiming to be a Republican when he has never been anything but a Democrat. But Judge Dent is not merely a dishonest politician; he is a flunkey, and we might even say a fool. His language to Mr. Boutwell is such as only a flunkey could em-"Your organ, the New York Sun," he "in the same breath ridicules the capacity of your master, and dwells with emphasis apon your peculiar fitness for his office.

Mr. Dent is slightly mistaken when he calls the Sun the organ of the Secretary of the Treasury, but this isn't of much consequence. Indeed, we feel ourselves rather flattered by Dent's assertion. What we want is an honest and high-minded administration of the Government. We desire most ardently to see the Executive Department raised out of the impotence and disrepute to which it has been reduced. We hate and denounce the system of bestowing office in return for presents, and appointing to important places men like Augustus Ford, who cannot hold their commissions a moment except in defiance of the law. We desire to see the United States stand forth before the world as the champion of republican ideas, and the friend of every people that rise against slavery and oppression, as the people of Cuba have done. This is our programme, and if it is Mr. Boutwell's also, we are glad of it; and the Sun will always zealously cooperate with him or any other leader who is bold enough and firm enough to stand by these ideas in these days of donation-party politics, corrupt bestowal of office, and

shameful truckling to European diplomacy But what does Mr. Dent mean when he call General Grant the master of the Secretary of the Treasury? Does he suppose that the sycophancy which he may naturally feel to wards the great bestower of office is shared by the public at large? Does he imagine that other men are flunkeys because he is one Or would he force into the relations of the President and his Cabinet that spirit of slavish submission and plantation insolence which the Rebels who propose to use him in Mississippi always cultivated before the war, and love to gratify now? He ought to understand that the President of the United States is no man's master. He is a servant of the people and will be held to a rigorous account for his stewardship. But he is not the master of a single citizen; and even the snobs and flunkeys who are anxious to black his boots, in the hope that he will give them offices, will not own that he is their master. Least of all is he the master of a statesman like Mr. Boutwell, whose successful management of the Treasury Department constitutes a green and cheering oasis in the desert of this adminis-

It has been suggested that it would be lucky for General Grant if his brothers-inlaw could all be struck by lightning. If such an event is to happen at all, it would be an advantage to the General if the lightning would be very prompt and very effectual in the case of Judge Dent.

MR, PENDLETON'S STRONG POINT.

From the N. Y. Times. The Democratic candidate for the Governorship of Ohio is alleged by his partisan friends to be sound and consistent on the currency question. We are told that, "as a statesman and a political economist," he is pre-eminently pledged "to restore specie payments and to make a hard-money currency the sole legal-tender." For this service, it is said, "George P Hendleton is the man." And, by way of evidence, reference is made to his persistent opposition to greenbacks and the legislation which preceded their issue.

In a certain sense Mr. Pendleton is un doubtedly consistent. When the creation of a currency was a necessity of the war, it encountered no more strenuous opponent than the gentleman whom the Ohio Democracy have selected for their standard-bearer. His aim then was to break down the credit of the Government, and so render the further prosecution of the war impossible, and he endeavored to accomplish his object by assailing and depreciating the nation's cur

rency. Pursuing the same policy, Mr. Pendleton has since the war lost no opportunity of doing what he could to impair the national credit. He makes a direct attack upon it when he proposes to violate the contract entered into with the public creditor, and to redeem in greenbacks obligations made payable in gold. Mr. Pendleton's policy is a policy of repudiation, the mere promulgation of which was injurious, and the adoption of which would be absolutely ruinous to the credit of the Government.

Mr. Pendleton's consistency, then, is the consistency of a man whose sympathy with the Rebellion led him to oppose measures employed to suppress it; and whose hostility to the authority established by the war manifests itself in antagonism to the financial system which contributed to the Union triumph It is not improbable that this kind of consistency recommended him to the State Demo cratic Committee that nominated him. We do not believe, however, that it is a consistency which will secure the favor of a State that owes the proudest chapter in its angels to its part in resisting enemies of whom Mr-Pendleton was the scarcely disguised apo logist.

Apart from the uniformity of his course as an enemy of the public credit, Mr. Pendleton is grossly inconsistent. As a hard-money Democrat he might be supposed to desire the early resumption of specie payments. As the author and chief advocate of a scheme for paying the five-twenties in greenbacks, he does what he can to postpone resumption indefinitely.

The Pendleton scheme involves further issues of greenbacks. Its friends protest against the imputation that these further issues would be unlimited. But Mr. Pendle. ton himself has confessed that more greenbacks will be required for the attainment of his object, and in no other manner would it be attainable. In addition to repudiation, therefore, he would inflict upon the country a renewal of inflation, of which the inevitable effect would be to consign specie payments to a remote and uncertain future.

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