

SPIRIT OF THE PRESS.

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

THE REPUBLICANS AND THE SOUTH.

From the N. Y. Tribune.

To Major-General BENJAMIN F. BUTLER, M. C.—My Dear Sir—Your name, I think you will have remarked, is very often pronounced, from one end of our country to the other. Travelling somewhat, observing a little, and reading newspapers considerably—quite often hear it mentioned, and (it may surprise you to hear) not always admiringly. And yet, while I have for many years heard and read all manner of evil said of you—some of it absurdly groundless and false—I cannot recollect that I ever heard or read a suggestion that you were a fool. Now, I come before the public to impeach—not yourself personally, but a policy wherewith your name is popularly and prominently identified, as lacking rational motive and at war with common sense. I allude to that policy which prolongs indefinitely the proscription and disfranchisement of a large portion of the men of the South for their part in the late Rebellion.

Understand that I speak from the standpoint not of sentiment but of business. I hate, but am deficient in tact—in guile. I impeach it as nursing and intensifying enmities certain to subvert, at no distant day, the party which is identified with it.

I will not dwell upon the well-known fact that the late Governor Andrew, in his farewell message or address, put forth four years ago, strongly urged a policy antagonistic to this—a policy that contemplated the early and complete reconciliation of the South, through the enfranchisement and magnanimous treatment of her natural leaders. Nor need I draw your attention to the fact that General Sickles (a shrewd, thoroughly practical politician) officially reconstituted, more than three years ago, against the proscription of prominent and wealthy ex-Rebels, as depriving him of the services of the very men he urgently needed and could make most useful in governing South Carolina. Nor do I care to press home the fact, of which you cannot be ignorant, that the Southern men of education and property are by far more reasonable and less bitter than their poorer, more ignorant neighbors—are less implacable, more rational, and more ready to unite heartily in rebuilding the waste places of the land. Nor will I dwell upon the noble addition made, on motion of General Carl Schurz, to the latest national platform of the Republican party—that plank which declares proscription a temporary expedient, rendered necessary by a grave public peril, and to be abandoned when that peril shall have vanished. I rest on the naked fact that the Republican party imminently needs the good will which this policy repels, and must go under if that good will be not secured.

I assume that you realize the absolute necessity of the triumph of the fifteenth amendment to the success of General Grant's administration, and that you must be aware that the fate of that amendment is yet doubtful. Ten adverse States suffice to defeat it; and seven—New Jersey, Delaware, Maryland, Kentucky, Tennessee, California, and Oregon—are already beyond hope. The loss of Tennessee, was at once a calamity and a blunder—one of these intense stupidities which a great party is seldom allowed to repeat. How Rhode Island, Indiana, Georgia and Nebraska stand, I need not inform you. Suffice it that it will require the wisest counsels and the best efforts to avert the threatened failure of that great and wise measure of safety, benignity, and peace.

The men now coming to Congress to demand that Tennessee be upset, and Virginia remanded, and Mississippi and Texas held as satrapies for an indefinite period, unless they vote as they are bidden, utterly fail to comprehend the situation. They evidently suppose that we have nothing at stake—that we may keep three or four States unreconstructed and unrepresented in Congress during pleasure. I hope you know better—at all events, I do. We do not merely need the fifteenth amendment ratified before 1872—we urgently need it now. If it be delayed one year longer we shall have more than one State Legislature besides that of New York assuming to withdraw the ratification already accorded; and, while you and I may rightly deny the legal validity of such withdrawal, I am sure neither of us will dispute its moral weight. Connecticut is to hold an election next April, when the votes of her colored citizens will be found exceedingly useful, if not absolutely needed; New Jersey and Pennsylvania have United States Senators depending on the result of their next State election respectively, and the like votes are absolutely needed in the former, and probably so in the latter. Several seats in the next Congress from Ohio and other States will be won or lost as the right to vote for members shall be exercised by their whole people or only by the whites. Kentucky, Maryland, and Delaware will each stoutly and hopefully contested next year if the amendment be meantime ratified, while we shall not elect one member from all three of these States if it be not. To my apprehension, the control of the next House of Representatives will probably hinge on that event.

I ask you, then, to consider, as a practical man, whether we can afford to pick and choose from among those disposed to favor that amendment—whether it will not be suicidal folly to repel any proffered or possible support. I ask you whether any attempt to pry into the motives of those who may favor it—to ascertain whether they were not Rebels, and, if so, whether they have repented of having been such—is not a childish exhibition of that spirit which "goeth before a fall." In short, I ask you to consider this whole matter in the light of naked, hearty, wholly common sense, and act upon it as the demands of the exigency shall seem to require.

The urgency of the case must excuse the freedom of this appeal. Rightly or wrongly, the country regards you as the leader in Congress of those who have been most exacting in their requirements of the defeated Rebels, and least inclined to treat them with confidence or generosity. The reproaches which I have incurred in this quarter will never attach to you, and your adhesion to the policy which the occasion demands will never be attributed to weakness or sentimentality. I ask you, therefore, to place yourself promptly and heartily at the head of a movement looking to the instant and complete removal of all political disabilities whatever from any and every one who favors or shall favor the fifteenth amendment, and their prompt restoration to all the privileges of citizenship. "Let us have peace!"

Yours, HORACE GREELY.

New York, Nov. 26, 1869.

THE CASE OF MCFARLAND.

From the N. Y. World.

We have expressed our notion of the propriety of a breakage of the sixth con-

tractment by way of a private protest against an infraction of the seventh. It only remains to be added that there is no testimony in the case of the shooting of Mr. Richardson by Mr. McFarland, that even that inadequate excuse for homicide was furnished. That Mr. Richardson has paid suit to a wife separated from her husband appears most true. True, he has avowed an intention to marry her. But there is nothing to show that the head and front of his offending had any more than this extent. Whatever Mr. McFarland may have suspected, he has adduced nothing to justify any suspicion other than this. And killing, where there is any doubt in the case, is more murder, whatever be thought of it when the case is clear. If not, all that any murderer need do is to shoot any person who may for any reason be obnoxious to him, and get himself held harmless by avowing—not his warranted conviction but his bare suspicion—that the person so shot has been misleading the spouse of the person so shooting. To erect every such man a judge in his own case is simply to inaugurate anarchy, and to insure impunity to any murderer; since his allegation would be, in most cases, impossible of refutation. In one recent case—that of Dickey—the murderer brought the charge, and it so happened that it could be distinctly disproven. But except for the accidental presence of witnesses the story of Dickey would have been accepted, and have insured him impunity for his crime. We do not say that McFarland's charge against Richardson is equally baseless. But it is certainly the business of a man who resorts to these violent means of righting himself to make sure and to be able to certify others that he has been wronged. And even then it cannot justify, however it may be considered to extenuate, the illegal taking of life. If adultery is properly a capital offense, let it be made so by law. If not, let no injured husband be suffered to become a law unto himself. It is also to be remembered, without reference to this case in particular, that the men who have chosen this mode of asserting themselves have generally been depraved and heartless men, whose feelings nobody could regard as exceptionally sensitive. And it is also to be remembered, with especial reference to this case, that their killings are usually conducted in a cowardly manner.

But, apart from this cases it is notable that the feeling from which all these homicides spring is that of the intellectual inferiority of women. It is the outgrowth of the feeling which woman's rights associations exist to put down, and that she relies upon moral force for her "protection" which men are supposed to be capable of exercising for themselves. Nobody ever hears of a woman's turning out to assassinate another woman for betraying her domestic peace; or if, as in the case of the injured wife of Portland, of whom we lately read, a sporadic female does occasionally resort to this violent means of protecting her honor, she is looked upon as a strong-minded exception to the female rule, unless she indicates her sex by some such exclusively feminine trait as the injured wife in that case displayed, by tearing off from her perforated and prostrate rival the false hair in the factitious meshes of which her own lawful lord had been ensnared. As it is a curious fact that the women who are the chief champions of the "equal rights" of their sex are also the women who confess the dependence of their sex by calling for peculiar penalties against the seducers of its innocence and weakness. Men have no legal protection against their wives and blaudishments. No man has yet been found so fatuous as to bring suit against his seducer, and it is certain that if he did so no action would be held to lie. Yet the women who insist upon equality before the laws in general, also insist upon inequality before the law in this particular. The verdict of the Cleveland convention would doubtless be, supposing the charge of McFarland to be well founded, that it was a valid excuse for his conduct; whereas it ought, in logical consistency, to be that he had usurped the functions of his ex-wife, and committed an officious and superstitious crime. So much more potent is instinct than logic in even the strong-minded female breed.

MR. GARFIELD ON THE CURRENCY AND SPECIE PAYMENTS.

From the N. Y. Herald.

The chairman of the House Committee in Congress on Banking and Currency has been "interviewed" by our Washington correspondent relative to his views on the subject of returning to specie payments and the currency. The honorable gentleman appears brimful of this subject, and is preparing to take an active part in the consideration of it in the approaching session of Congress. He does not think this matter properly belongs to the Committee of Ways and Means, which has heretofore "set itself up not only to provide ways and means for raising revenue, but to shape the financial policy of the country," and it is his intention to make his committee the financial one of the House in this respect. Mr. Garfield evidently is in earnest, and the country will be gratified to know that he entertains some broad and liberal views, which the Committee of Ways and Means has not shown, on the currency and national bank questions.

Mr. Garfield is becoming emancipated from the on-to-specie-payment and currency theories of some of his party organs and men in Congress. While he avows himself in favor of resuming specie payments, and would set his face towards resumption, he does not believe "the way to resume is to resume," and would not do anything that might "suddenly unsettle values and create great financial distress." So far, then, he is on the right track. But he has not got far enough in his financial education for he still clings to the old idea that a contraction of the currency is necessary to bring about specie payments. He has, consequently, a scheme for gradual contraction with a view to accomplish that object. But why contraction? There is not more currency in the country than it needs, and any contraction must prove disastrous. If the volume of currency be left as it is, the extraordinary growth of the country and the increase of population and business will operate the same as contraction; for the increased demand for money as a circulating medium would make it more and more scarce relatively. This is what we call growing up to specie payments healthfully and gradually, and what we have advocated all along. But Mr. Garfield makes a mistake in supposing specie payments depend altogether upon the volume of currency. Specie payments can only be resumed when the exchanges are not so much against us—when the balance of exchange with foreign countries is more equalized, and when the precious metals cannot be drained from us to meet the demands of foreigners. Here lies the difficulty, and we recommend Mr. Garfield to turn his attention to that rather than to the mere abstract and impracticable theory of contraction.

As regards the national bank circulation, and withdrawing that with a view of substituting legal-tenders in its place, Mr. Garfield is right. There is no reason why the Gov-

ernment and people should not derive the profits from a national currency, which amount to that portion which the national banks circulate, to about twenty-four millions of dollars a year, and there is every reason why this vast sum should not be given away to private corporations, particularly when the people would have a uniform and better currency by substituting legal-tenders for national bank notes. Let Mr. Garfield mature some measure for effecting this change, and press it upon Congress with all his ability, and he may feel assured of the approbation of the public. He will have uphill work for this national bank monopoly is a mighty power. Still it is a work worthy of a statesman, and he will find his reward in promoting the interests of the country and in the gratitude of the people.

PAITISAN INFLUENCE IN THE NAVY DEPARTMENT.

From the N. Y. Sun.

For a long time past there has been slowly growing and steadily increasing a strong feeling of jealousy among the line officers of the Navy against the staff officers on the subject of their relative rank. This feeling is so false and ungenerous in principle, and has of late produced such unexpected and unjust results, that the staff officers find themselves forced to appeal to Congress for redress. This they will do at the approaching session. The trouble originates in the assumption on the part of the line officers of the erroneous notion that rank and command are necessarily associated together, and that the interests and discipline of the navy are placed in constant jeopardy by the staff officers having any rank at all. They forget that the power of command is clearly and alone vested in them by law, and that no staff officer, be his rank what it may, can exercise the slightest control, except in its own department. Nevertheless, they have always fought and continue to fight against any accession or increase of rank to the staff; and lately they have done so with such success that they have accomplished even its degradation, and in so doing have outraged every principle of equity, and even tarnished the honor of the service.

Since the advent of the present administration, in whose official appointments military men have been very largely selected, and under which, in the very organization of the Navy Department, a line officer and a strong line partisan, by some unheard-of authority, immediately assumed its control over the nominal Secretary, an old line scheme which had long been hatching has been fully developed.

Under this prejudiced and thoroughly one-sided influence, the Navy Department, taking advantage of the vacation of Congress, when redress could not be had, and assuming a power to degrade only allowed by law to courts-martial and the President, issued an order (No. 129) by which every staff officer in the navy, without trial and without cause, has been reduced; and this reduction in many cases has gone to the extent of two whole grades. It is stated that the threat that this would be done if the disgraceful bill of Mr. Grimes was not passed by the House, was made last spring to the House Naval Committee by a well-known line officer of high rank; and now the thing has been done. It is true that the nominal Secretary of the Navy proposes to settle the difficulty through a mixed board of officers; but no such settlement can meet the exigencies of the case.

It must be clear to every citizen and member of Congress that the line influence in the Navy Department is doing much harm, and that it is too reckless and too arrogant for a healthy condition of the naval service or for the public good. It needs to be officially strangled by act of Congress.

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