SPIRIT OF THE PRESS.

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

THE FUTURE OF PARTIES. From the N. Y. Times.

The tone of the President's Message and of the opening debates in Congress sufficiently indicates the future policy of the Republican party-if we may call that a policy which is rather an accident or the natural consequence of foregone events. The party of moral ideas"-and there is a substantial truth as well as a sarcasm in the phrase-proposes now to settle down into the stern yet necessary, the honest yet wearisome, task of paying off the national debt, of restoring and improving the dignity of our relations towards foreign powers, and of introducing into the Government civil service something of that purity and esprit de corps which have characterized, as a rule, the service of the army, the navy, and the judicary.

These are praiseworthy purposes. They embody that which is most essential in a republican government. But they make no appeal whatever to passion or to popular vanity. Even in the case of Cuba, in which a vivid appeal might have been made to the sympathies of the masses, a calm statesmanship and a rigid observance of international law, addressing only the cooler judgment of enlightened publicists, take the place of hot invective and of a grand apotheosis of the Monroe doctrine and the Bird of Freedom. The Darien Canal carries with it some elements of popularity; beyond that all is humdrum duty and quiet resolution to lessen the burdens of taxation while the national credit is made sure. There are, to be sure, some fag-ends of reconstruction left to be completed, but reconstruction is now so nearly an accomplished fact that both parties are willing to let it have free course and run, in the confident assurance that the good involved in the general result will ultimately overshadow all defects in the agencies em-

We have employed the phrase "a party of great moral ideas," for nothing can be more descriptive of the Republican organization, of the impassioned zeal with which it will fight for a principle, of the persuasive and proselyting power it can exert when grand interests are at stake. It has unswerving courage in the front of battle, but it detests the tiresome drill, the irksome discipline, and the long march that leads up to the enemy; to carry out the army comparison-it has its inert main body, its guerillas, who, like the Ku-Klux Klan, insist on fighting after the war is over, and its camp followers and sutlers. The latter were a large and influential class, and the Republican, like all other parties, has its corrupt element, of which nothing save continued defeat can purify it. So long as it has the prestige of victory and spoils, it can rely upon the voice and vote of a host of worthies who are sure to leave it in the day of its adversity.

We argue, therefore, that the Republicans are in a position altogether different from any they have occupied during the sixteen years of that wonderful career in which they have achieved successes and reforms which seemed, even to themselves at the outset, to be the work of a century. They have no longer a hold upon the ordinarily indifferent class who vote only for ideas; their theory of administration is too honest for the camp followers, and they are deficient in mock thunder and claptrap. More than that, patriotic duty compels them to enforce onerous fiscal oblis, with none of the usual sops to Cer berus in the shape of glory, armed acquisition of territory, or other violent wavings of the American flag.

This is a sorrowful statement; for it involves a confession that many good men only support a cause in its emergencies; hat many weak men desert it except under he stimulus of high example; and that the corruptionists who follow its march to victory are willing to fight upon the other side when the spoils are no longer forthcoming. Is the Democratic party in any better position? So far as affirmative political doctrine is concerned, it has done. Its "mission" for years past has been to prophesy terrible results from the continuance of Republican rule. These predicted results have never come to pass. If they had it would have made little difference; for the Democracy has no claim to any policy of its own-no distinctive theory as to the payment of the national debt; no scheme of reconstruction, save to fall back upon the status existing before the Rebellion, and which caused the war; no purpose and hardly a pretense of honesty and economy in expenditure; and no power of appeal to the populace in any bold, aggressive mode of handling our foreign relations. The Democracy has nothing affirmative left. What little of principle it may assert is but a sapless and withered thing of the past-an old man's memory of great contests over petty affairs. It only exhibits itself as a drag upon the wheel of progress. Its conservatism has degenerated into Bourbonism.

How will it be in 1872, when all these causes in both parties will combine to centrol another Presidential election? The Democracy will have no record save that of the vilest and most thievish of State and municipal governments; but that record alone will be of magnitude enough to rouse the indifferent element among the Republicans and teach it that "great moral ideas" are continuous and not spasmodic in their action. At the same time the Republicans will come before the people with a story of national credit restored. of debts paid, of economy enforced, of territory acquired, of peace and good-will established between lately warring sections, of commercial prosperity, and of great material enterprises accomplished. In the meantime sundry causes of discontent will have been removed. Gold and paper, we may hope, will be equivalent in value, the rough fluctuations in the price of gold which now imperil the importer and the merchant will have passed away, taxation will have been reduced, and a compromise will have been effected upon the fariff question by which justice to the consumers shall be reconciled with reasonable encouragement to domestic industry. With such Democratic negations on the one side, and Republican achievements on the other, we may hope for and predict a national Republican triumph in 1872.

SHALL THE INCOME TAX BE CON-TINUED?

The unjust and odious income tax differs from the other fiscal questions which challenge the consideration of this Congress in its freedom from entanglement with collateral subjects. It is an acknowledged excrescence in our financial system; having been originally enacted for a limited period, and its continuance being recommended by the President, at a reduced rate, only for another limited period of three years. It differs from the currency question and the tariff question

in the fact that no particular section of the

country, no great interest, nor any political | subject to redemption. The advance of their party, feels that it has any stake in the perpetuation of the present state of the law. is a mere question of revenue, pure and simple; having nothing in it that can enlist party zealotry on one side or the other. admission of its advocates, that the tax ought to be transitory, betokens their despair of defending it on any ground of principle; and as a temporary expedient it can be justified only by the insufficiency of other sources of revenue. But, in point of fact, the revenue from other sources is redundant; the current surplus being sufficient, as is claimed, to reduce the public debt at the rate of nearly a hundred millions per annum. Its total abolition is confessedly not a question of principle, but only a question of time; and what time can be more opportune for the removal of an unjust and odious tax than the earliest moment when it ceases to be necessary?

We have recently set forth some of the reasons why an income tax operates more unequally and oppressively in this country than it does in Great Britain, showing that a difference of circumstances renders the British precedent inapplicable to this country. But even in Great Britain the income tax is felt to contravene every principle of equity.

The strength of denunciation with which Mr. Bright assailed the income tax of Great Britain, and his vigorous, almost indignant, protests against its gross inequality and inustice, should arrest the zeal of its advocates in this country, who have little to stand upon but the British precedent, and who fancy that the British tax is regarded as equitable. If it is unjust there, it is, as we took some pains to show, a hundred-fold more unjust in a new country like the United States. The Commissioner of Internal Revenue is the only officer of our Government who has undertaken to defend its equity, and as we are willing our readers shall see all that can be said in its favor, we insert his argument:-

"After all, it is but a tax upon the increased wealth of the nation; and when it is understood that Government securities are exempted from taxation, and that the interest on these securities produces a large amount of the incomes of tax-payers, I submit if it will be wise to abolish the income tax as long as the labor, industry, and business of the country are directly or indirectly subjected to any considerable taxation. These observations are intended to apply to the question whether the income tax shall be retained or abolished, and not to the rate of the retained or abolished, and not to the rate of the tax, or the manner of its assessment and collec-

It is discreditable to our Government that reasoning so flimsy and inconsequent as this should be put forth in a public document. Mr. Delano defends the income tax on the ground that it is paid by the bondholders whose property is otherwise exempted from taxation. For the refutation of this argument nothing is required but a slight knowledge of arithmetic. The contributions of the bondholders make but an insignificant fraction of the proceeds of the income tax. The total amount of the bonds is about \$2,000,000,000. Secretary Boutwell, in his annual report, estimates that from seven hundred to nine hundred millions of these bonds are held abroad. Supposing the amount in foreign hands to be sight hundred millions, there would remain in this country twelve hundred millions, the interest on which is subject to the income tax. The interest on twelve hundred millions at six per cent. is seventy-two millions, and the income tax of five per cent, on this interest is only \$3,600,000; whereas Mr. Delano states that the whole income tax collected this year will amount to \$26,000,000. It will thus be seen that the bulk of the income tax does not fall upon the bondholders, as Mr. Delano assumes, but upon other classes of the community. Allowing for the exemptions and for the fact that the en-forty bonds yield only five interest, probably not more than three millions of the income tax are collected from the bondholders, and the other twenty-three millions are the most unjust tax ever levied.

Mr. Delano defends it on the ground that it is a tax on "the increased wealth of individuals from investments. "After all," he says, "it is but a tax upon the increased wealth of the nation." If this were true, and all the increased wealth of the country contributed in equal proportions, the tax would be justifiable. But it is not true. A large part of it is levied on salaries which are barely sufficient to meet the current wants of the recipients. It is not a tax upon their "increased wealth." but upon their scanty means of hving. The payers of this part of the income tax are no better off at the end of the year than they were at the beginning. Instead of being paid out of their accumulations, it curtails their ordinary comforts.

That large part of the inceease of the national wealth which comes with the least exertion is not touched by the income tax at all. We refer to the hundreds of millions of dollars invested in this country by shrewd, wealthy men in unimproved real estate, which is constantly rising in value, but yielding no tangible income as long as it remains unsold. There is no class in our country who are so rapidly increasing in wealth as the investors in such property, and yet they pay no income tax, while people who make money by their activity and industry, and who are the real creators of the increased value of such investments, bear all the burden. Nothing could be more unjust than a law which thus exempts accumulations which come without exertion, and taxes the uncertain profits of business, and the precarious salaries of individuals who have no resource when sickness or the caprice of employers puts a stop to

their earnings. Moreover, the income tax scarcely touches agriculture, the most extensive and most thriving interest in the country. The rise in the value of farms is as inaccessible to this form of taxation as the enhancement of unimproved real estate. The food of the farmer's family, raised on his own land, escapes entirely, while that large part of other in-somes which is expended for food pays the full five per cent. No tax is endurable which is distributed with such glaring disregard of equity,

As there is no reason why a renewal of this unjust tax should be made a party question, we would fain hope that it may be permitted to die a natural death with the expiration of the present law.

TINKERING THE TARIFF. From the N. Y. Tribune.

If there be one among the many excellent suggestions embodied in the President's first Annual Message which, above all others, stamps him as a man of practical good sense it is that in which he counsels Congress to let the tariff alone until the ardnous task of funding our great national debt at a lower rate of interest shall have been virtually accomplished. If the debt were of moderate amount, we might easily fund it at four per cent. Its magnitude alone renders the task one calculated to tax the resources of a master of finance. It is only by making U. S. bonds scarcer and scarcer in the market that we can hope so to appreciate them that the holders must either accept a lower rate of interest, or give place to others who will. If we can keep on buying and retiring two millions of bonds per week, we must soon be able to fund the residue at a low rate, so far as they shall be

price in London directly on the receipt of the President's Message foreshadows the result of a hearty concurrence by Congress in the leading suggestions of the Executive.

A bountiful revenue is one vital condition precedent of the funding in question; for without such a revenue the purchase and retiring of bonds must soon be arrested. present tariff and internal taxes afford the weekly and monthly income required-very nearly twenty-four millions per month. Of these, ten millions (gold) are required to pay the interest on our debt. Over two millions more are required for pensions; the cost of running the Government cannot be brought below eight millions (currency) per month more; so that barely four millions per month are left to be employed in buying up the principal of our debt after the surplus in the Treasury shall have been drawn down to its proper level. This is as little as will answer. The income tax expires by limitation with the year just before us; if renewed, it will, as General Grant recommends, be reduced; so that, until our debt be funded, and the heavy burden of its interest lightened, we have no revenue to spare, and we beg Congress not to let any go. Fund the five-twenties at four-and-a-half per cent. (it should be four), and we shall have twenty millions per annum saved by that process; and we can reduce our taxes by that amount, yet keep on paying off debt as before.

We understand that the House Committee of Ways and Means have substantially agreed that the right thing to do with the tariff, when the time shall have arrived for doing anything, is to extend the free list. That seems a wise conclusion. A very long list may be made of articles now subject to various duties which together afford very little income to the Treasury, while the trouble and expense of assessing and collecting duties upon them are very considerable. We presume a hundred articles might be added to the free list without reducing the net receipts from customs; and two hundred more at a cost of but a few millions of revenue. At a proper time we shall favor and urge such extension of the free list. Shall coal be placed in that list?

We hope it may, for reasons quite other than those commonly urged by the advocates of "free coal." New England will obtain some coal from Nova Scotia a little cheaper than she now does; our gas-company "rings" will make a little more money out of their Nova Scotia coal-mines than they now do; but that they will give to their customers either cheaper or better gas, this deponent, not knowing, can't say. Southward and westward of the Delaware, "free coal" will amount to just nothing at all, save the loss of \$750,060 per annum to the Treasury.

READ BOTH SIDES!

From the St. Louis Democrat. We see now what a man may come to who depends entirely upon the New York Tribune for information. Mr. Beecher's defense of his course in the marriage and at the funeral of Mr. Richardson, and of his very strange language, prejudging a criminal case, declaring the wife and the deceased utterly blameess, and denouncing the imprisoned husband, was that he had not read the papers about the case, and depended for his information upon the editors of the Tribune. Now the editors who informed him are very honest and worthy persons, but, like all other human beings, they are sometimes influenced in their judgments by personal feeling, sympathy or pre-judice. It was at the house of one of the editors of that paper, it appears, that Mrs. McFarland, while yet undivorced, received many visits from Mr. Richardson, and at that house, still being the wife of another, she occupied with Richardson adjoining rooms, there being no room between them. It was there that she was seen by a servant to put her arms about his neck and kiss himhough still the wife of another. Another of the editors of the Tribune was the principal witness in obtaining the divorce, and came from New York to Indiana for that purpose. No blame to her for that! It was not only right, it was her duty to testify to the facts. But her prominence on that occasion rendered it quite natural that the sympathies of Mrs. Calhoun were with the wife, and it was Mrs. Cal houn who applied to Mr. Beecher to solem nize the marriage. Had Mr. Beecher known that the divorce was obtained in Indiana, simply because there was not alleged to be any ground for it under the laws of New York, he might have hesitated before speaking so strongly as he did. But, as he says, he relied entirely upon statements made to him by his friends of the Tribune, and with that paper Mr. Richardson was connected. Did it never occur to the Rev. Henry Ward Beecher that in such a case it would be well to hear both

Not because his informants were not trustworthy, but because they were partisans in the nature of the case-because their natural sympathies were strong! The informants upon whom Mr. Beecher relied are indeed most honorable persons, to whose statements he had reason to give great confidence. But what one of us all is not liable to be warped in judgment by personal feeling? To say that the editors of the Tribune may have been, is not to question their integrity—it is simply to say that they were human. Knowing that they were human, and knowing their natural sympathies, Mr. Beecher would have done wisely had he insisted upon reading both sides.

He did not, and is in trouble. Good people and honest people get into trouble in exactly the same way every day. They hear one side of a story, are content with that, and instantly become violent partisans. If the truth happens to be against them, of course they suffer. But it serves them right. They ought to have read both sides. No man has any business to shirk the responsibility of having an opinion of his own. If he hears one side only, he accepts the opinion of somebody else, and suffers his influence to be used as a tool by another. Mr. Beecher's possession of large influence imposes on him commensurate responsibility, which he cannot shake off. So every man or woman who has influence, be it large or small, is bound to direct it by an independent opinion, not borrowed from any partisan, but formed from a knowledge of the case. And the case always means more than one side of

the case. But it is a prevailing vice of the times to permit somebody else to do our thinking for us; to hear one side, adopt that, and not in-frequently to refuse to hear any other, with a fierce bigotry proportioned to the narrowness of information in which it originates. Men who hear only one side are always bigots. Mr. Beecher would never have blazed out so violently against those who criticized him if he had known the whole truth. Exactly the same spirit is engendered in politics. won't have the nasty thing in my house!" said a radical of a Democratic sheet, able and well edited, but villainously wrong in politics. Unhappy man! his was not the radicalism of He borrowed it of somebody, and reason therefore was afraid to hear both sides. The radicals are scarce, we hope, who are guilty of such stupidity, but we honestly fear that there are few Democrats who read both sides,

ourse they are still more intolerant, and be- his accounts are rendered, instead of being ing absolute fools, politically, rave about the promptly and thoroughly examined and necessity of shooting folks who do not agree with them.

New questions are coming up for discussion. Men are forming-or borrowingopinions. We wish every man could take to himself seriously the lesson of Beecher's blunder, and resolve to hear both sides before surrendering himself a captive to either. The man who hears only one does not form his own opinion; he has it crammed into him, as | we put dressing into a turkey. And the men who do not form their own opinions are not voters, but voting cattle. Somebody drives that herd, or, like a troop of mules, they follow the leader with a bell—the leader, not uncommonly, being ridden by somebody else, with purposes of his own.

'Men and brethren," as Horace says, let us each do his own thinking! And to that end let us hear both sides. So may we avoid the unhappy predicament into which this same Horace and sundry others have drawn poor Beecher-that of finding himself chief champion of a cause the merits of which he has not investigated! How painful it must be to be leading advocate in a case one knows

nothing about! De your own thinking! Nobody who buys his opinions as he does his steaks at the meatshop, ready out for use, can be said to have any opinion of his own. The butcher may be a very reliable person, but even from him we like to buy only after comparing and selecting what is best. If, unfortunately, your thinking apparatus does not produce independent thought, and you are forced to depend on some intellectual meatshop for ideas, at least exercise a man's faculty of choosing for yourself! Hear both sides and

ABUSE OF THE FRANKING PRIVILEGE. From the N. Y. Herald.

The franking privilege enjoyed by Congress has long been justly inveighed against by the entire newspaper press of the country. The system in itself would not be so bad or so condemnatory, however, were it not that it leads to such abuses as has drawn upon it universal odium. In his excellent message to Congress and to the country President Grant assures the people of an administration of economy and retrenchment in all the departments of the Government under his especial charge. It is to be hoped that Congress will keep step with the Executive in this course of retrenchment and economy, and that the first earnest of its good intentions in this regard will be to abolish the franking privilege altogether, or institute a reform in the present system which will render impossible the frauds upon the Post Office Department, to which it is now notoriously subject.

The abuse of the privilege has gone so far that not even the semblance of the autograph of a Representative or a Senator is necessary to frank letters to the most distant parts of the Union. In Washington not one person in a thousand ever stamps a letter mailed in the Post Office. It is all the same whether Congress be sitting or not, from the fact that members while in Washington, by means of engraved stamps, flood the city with their autographs, which hold good all the term of their offices and for years after they are dead -of which there have been instances. Not only mail bags of letters are thus fraudulently transmitted through the Post Office, but tons of Congressional reports and documents and such heavy matter, that is never read, but which involves the Post Office Department in great expense and encumbers the mails and often retards their prompt transmission from point to point.

Congress, perhaps for want of a little good advice in the matter, has hitherto persistently and contumaciously refused to abolish their privilege of franking letters and Congressional documents, notwithstanding all the abuses which we have pointed out as attaching thereto, and which have never been denied as existing. Now we propose once more that the privilege be abolished, but not without offering a substitute in its place. Here it is. Let there be a law passed granting to members of Congress while engaged in their Congressional duties postage stamps for all proper and necessary purposes, the Postmaster-General to keep a record of the amount of stamps thus contributed by his department, designating the quantity allowed to each Representative and Senator. If Congress is imbued with any of the political wisdom of General Grant, who first in his own administration of affairs promises economy and retrenchment and recommends the same much needed policy to the legislative branch of the Government, it will surely move in the matter and act at once upon our suggestion. With our suggestion the economists and reformers in Congress can once more direct their efforts to the removal of the abuses of the franking privilege. The opponents of the change must be few, as opposition to such a just and economic measure would assuredly bring down on members the obloquy and odium of

their constituents. The change which we here propose in the franking system would embrace all the departments of the Government, civil and military. The check to an undue and extravagant use or misappropriation of postage stamps would lie in the fact that the Postmaster-General in his annual report to the President for submission to Congress and the country would be required to make a return of the amount of stamps supplied to each Senator and Representative. In the same way he would designate the amount consumed by the heads of the various departments, and thus would be insured not only a redress of the present great abuses of the franking privilege, but would show the extent to which the Post Office Department would be entitled to credit for its share in the performance of the great work of government.

FRAUDS OF NAVY PAYMASTERS.

From the N. Y. Sun. We notice that Secretary Robeson has neglected to make any change in the system of settling the accounts of navy paymasters. This oversight is rather singular, inasmuch as the Sun has already called attention to the fact that eight or ten paymasters are defaulters, and that the defalcations of Paymasters Marcy, Cahoone, Washington, Forbes, and Parker amount in the aggregate to nearly a half million dollars, and possibly more. Every one outside of the department is fully advised of these extraordinary deficits, and yet it seems that nothing is to be done to prevent their repetition whenever unprincipled paymasters choose to use the funds of the nited States to pay their little bills. Under the present loose and rotten system, there seems to be no way of detecting such irregularities until they have become so serious that the law officers of the Government must be called in to initiate proceedings against the bondsmen of the offenders. The criminal is allowed to sink deeper and deeper into the quicksand, and finally disappear from sight altogether, before a single step is taken to protect the Government.

A paymaster, whether from ignorance or criminal intent, is permitted to misappropri-

and a great many who read not even one. Of | ate Government funds for years; and when passed, they are placed in a pigeon-hole, after the good old-fashioned, careless, red-tape style, there to slumber for one, two, or three years before they are brought to the light of invertigation, when they may be found to be utterly bad and incorrect. Meanwhile the guilty party has been ordered to duty again on a foreign cruise, and cannot be reached for the moment to explain the ugly discrepancies that appear on his final reckoning. He is formally noti-fied that he is a debtor to the Treasury Department so many thousand dollars. He reponds to this announcement by quietly taking from his strong box the necessary sum and remitting it to the Treasury, and for his present cruise he is safe. He practi-cally robs Peter to pay Paul, and Uncle Sam is put off. The upshot of the affair is that the bondsmen pay the deficit so far as

they are holden, and the Government loses the balance. This sad state of affairs is owing entirely to the worthless system of settling accounts which the Government adopts. No one department controls the final reckoning of the lisbursing agents in the navy. The Navy Department settles the accounts for clothing, provisions, and supplies, while the Treasury controls the monetary expenditures. Between the two there is no close connection or intimacy. Each one looks for its own, and gives no care for the other.

Millions of dollars are doubtless now at stake, and yet there is no way or probability of ascertaining how much is due to the Government from its paymasters or financial agents. Until the auditors of the Treasury or of the Navy Department have entire control of the disbursements of the navy officers, there will be no means of reaching final results in a way satisfactory to the Treasury. In justice to paymasters, too, there ought to be a prompt and thorough settlement of accounts; for frequently, after an interval of two or three years, the only persons who can authenticate them are dead or out of reach, so that paymasters are sacrificed to the delay and recklessness of the Government.

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Blank Powers of Attorney for collecting dividends can be had at the office of the Company, No. 238 South THIRD Street. Street.
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