

SPRIT OF THE PRESS.

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

IGNATIUS DONNELLY, EX-M. C. From the N. Y. Tribune.

This gentleman has favored us with a reply to our recent notice of him much longer than that notice. We cannot print it verbatim, but we will give its substance in this conspicuous position.

I. Mr. Donnelly insists that he was not the bolting candidate in his district last year, but that his Republican opponent was, and points triumphantly to his vote respectively—Donnelly, 11,223; Andrews, 8595—as proving his assertion. We gave that vote fully and fairly in our former article, but we do not give it the force that he does. Mr. Donnelly was a young man and now to the State when the Republicans of his district took him up (in 1864) and elected him to Congress; re-electing him in 1866. Not being a Clay nor a Webster man, Republicans thought two terms should satisfy him; but he insisted on another, divided the party, and threw away the seat. Now a true man, we think, would have said, "Since there is a considerable part of my Republican constituents who wish me to step aside, I will do it, harmonize the district, and save the seat." Mr. Donnelly chose the opposite course, and the next seat away. We think this proves him a false, selfish, unworthy man, and justifies our conviction that he cares nothing for the Republican party except as it ministers to his own aggrandizement.

II. Mr. Donnelly denies that the "Independent ticket," with the opposition candidate for Governor at its head, which came so near defeating the Republican Governor last month, was his work, and proves it. We were mistaken on that point, and retract our charge.

III. He says that he did not vote for the protective tariff acted on by the Thirty-ninth Congress at its first session; that the Congressional Globe has wrongly recorded his vote as for the bill; that the Journal of the House (which we do not see) correctly records him as voting against the bill. He does not say that he ever sought a correction of the wrong record made in the official organ of Congress—the only record of its votes that is distributed to the people. This matter is so important that we must give Mr. Donnelly's account of it verbatim. It is as follows:—

"A few weeks in regard to my tariff record. You charge that I voted in the Thirty-ninth Congress, as a Republican from Pennsylvania might be expected to do. This is so far from being correct that, if you will turn to page 372, Part IV, Congressional Globe, 1st session, thirty-ninth Congress, you will find that I voted against the increase of the duties on coal and railroad iron, and in favor of postponing the whole bill to the next session. The Journal of the House (which we do not see) correctly records him as voting against the bill. He does not say that he ever sought a correction of the wrong record made in the official organ of Congress—the only record of its votes that is distributed to the people. This matter is so important that we must give Mr. Donnelly's account of it verbatim. It is as follows:—

"It is true that, during the war, I sustained and defended on the stump a high tariff, precisely the sustained draft laws, military arrests, confiscation bills, and other measures which were deemed essential to the preservation of the national life. No sacrifice was too great if the nation demanded it at our hands. We are now in an era of profound peace; the necessity which then existed has ceased to exist; and the financial, commercial, and industrial condition of the country rises into the first consequence. Is it fair to denounce a man as a 'sinuous and slimy demagogue' for refusing to sustain as a peace measure that which he sustained under the pressure of necessity as a war measure? Is it fair to hold that, whenever a public man changes his mind, he must necessarily be a second-rate man? I fear but few editors could stand such a test.

"Our Western country is passing through a period of gloom and embarrassment greater than that of 1857. Our produce of all kinds scarcely pays the cost of production, while everything we purchase is inordinately high. We feel that, while we pay large taxes to the support of the Government (which we do not grade), we are also paying still larger taxes for the support of a part of our fellow-citizens who enjoy greater property and wealth than we. Out of our pockets we are made to contribute to their abundance. As a Republican, I feel that the Republican party must either set its face against the high tariff protective duties advocated by your paper, or lose forever this great Northwest. Whatever I have said, therefore, upon this subject, I have said through an honest and sincere conviction, and not only to the people, but to the party. Believe me very truly and respectfully yours,

IGNATIUS DONNELLY.

—Having thus given Mr. Donnelly's own version of this matter, we propose to compare it with the facts:—

Feb. 28, 1867 (nearly two years after the close of the war), Mr. Stevens of Pennsylvania, introduced a bill to amend the rules of the House, and take up the bill increasing the duties on imports as it came back amended from the Senate. The motion to suspend the rules was defeated by 69 yeas to 102 nays (not the two-thirds required to suspend the rules), but among the 102 yeas we find the name of Donnelly recorded. Is that also a mistake of the official organ?

Mr. Morrill, of Vermont, now asked leave to introduce a joint resolution "increasing temporarily the duties on imports"—said joint resolution providing (without limit of time) for an increase of twenty per cent. (or one-fifth of the former rate) on every article imported after ten days, except sugar, tea, coffee, salt, and coal. To which he afterward added railroad iron.

Objections being made, he moved a suspension of the rules, which did not prevail. Yeas, 71; nays, 95 (not two-thirds). Again we find the name of Donnelly among the yeas in the Globe (page 1639). Is that another error of the official organ?

Two days before, Mr. Morrill, of Vermont, had moved to close the debate on the general Tariff bill aforesaid, in order to bring the House to a vote upon its passage (as the Congress would expire within a week). This was a test question, and the friends and foes of protection took the mark accordingly. Yeas 70; nays 49—Donnelly among the yeas. Is this all wrong in the Globe? (page 1592.) All this, mind you, was long since the close of the war; showing that his pretense that he voted for high duties only as a war measure is false—an afterthought. His votes show what he meant then; his speech last fall shows what he means now.

We do not care to track this man farther. He has not seen fit to deny our former statement that he recently held a debate on political economy, wherein he took the side of protection against a Democrat who advocated free trade. We found this statement in a Minnesota paper. Do they blunder out that way like the Globe?

But Mr. Donnelly asks if a man may not honestly change his mind. Certainly he may—and his party too. It is not the fact that Mr. Donnelly has changed, but that he resorts to subtleties, dodges, and misstatements to conceal or misrepresent that change, that stamps his course as "sinuous and slimy." Let him say frankly, "I was a protectionist; I am now a free-trader. I was a Republican; I am henceforth a Democrat," and we shall not trouble him. We object only to his making a piratical use of the colors he has deserted.

IV. But there is "gloom and embarrassment" in the West, says Mr. Donnelly; hence he is a free-trader. Indeed! The Northwest is suffering because of the remoteness of her markets. She is largely

grain-growing—Minnesota especially so; and grain is now selling very low. We are buying heavily of hardware, steel, railroad iron, textile fabrics, wire, etc. etc. of the Old World; we want to pay for these partly in grain; but Europe has had good harvests this year, and wants little grain from us, and that little at low prices. Were we making at home the goods we thus buy from Europe, we should have an ample market for our grain at good prices; but they who make so much of our cloth don't want our bread; hence the West is embarrassed and distressed. General Jackson, under similar circumstances, forty-five years ago, said that the common-sense remedy for such a state of things as Mr. Donnelly complains of was to divert six hundred thousand of our people from agriculture to manufactures, and thus create a market for our agricultural staples greater than is afforded by all Europe. We believe that is the common-sense view of the matter—that the West will yet realize it. We only ask an open field and fair play, and with these we shall carry the West, as we carried it in '24 under the lead of Jackson and in '28 under that of Clay. For every Donnelly that we lose, inquiry and discussion will bring to us hundreds who will by honest, useful, productive labor, and have no sorrows on their political heads. We rest confidently on the sound instincts and true hearts of the people.

GEORGIA RECONSTRUCTION.

From the N. Y. Nation.

Astonishing as the Georgia Reconstruction bill is by itself, it becomes more so when one reads the arguments by which it is defended. Georgia has been already admitted to the Union, under a solemn act of Congress, or, in other words, under a pledge of the nation, after having formally fulfilled all the conditions exacted of her by the original reconstruction acts. What the supporters of the present bill say in support of the theory that she is not in the Union, is that her Senators had not been admitted to their places in the Senate, the majority of the Senate pronouncing them disqualified—something which might happen to New York to-morrow—and this is gravely given now as a reason why the General Government may overturn the State Government, and put the people under martial law, and impose fresh conditions of reconstruction. The expulsion of the negro members of the Legislature was a great outrage, but the constitutionality of it was very sensibly, on President Grant's recommendation, submitted to the court of the State. The Supreme Court has accordingly decided that it was unconstitutional, and it now remains for the Legislature to abide by the judicial decision, which it is generally believed it will do when it meets in January. But the promoters of the present measure, apparently having a horror of the slow and regular processes of American jurisprudence, and being enamored of imperial ways of settling things, refuse to wait, and have accordingly passed an act repudiating the legislation of last winter, over which the country toiled and sweated so much, breaking the public faith, and setting a shocking example of contempt for law. The worst of it is that one of the excuses put forward in defense of this high-handed violence is, that it is done for the protection of negroes and loyal men against the violence of their neighbors, as if the way to provide for their protection was to keep them before the eyes of their fellow-citizens as the cause of the subversion of the State government; and as if the respect of juries and magistrates for the law of the land could be promoted by exhibitions of Congressional disregard of it; and as if, in case the public opinion of Georgia cannot, or ought not, to be trusted for the protection of Georgia citizens, we ought not at once to provide permanent gendarmerie and Federal magistrates, armed with summary processes, instead of cheating the negro and the loyal whites with airy notions called a "provisional government," or "martial law," things which have just enough substance to irritate, and not enough to afford the smallest protection either for life, or limb, or property. Mr. Bingham made a strong and able protest against the force, but in vain.

MISMANAGEMENT OF THE NAVY.

From the N. Y. Sun.

Congress should at once appoint a select committee to examine into the reckless and foolish expenditure of money which has characterized the administration of the Navy Department since the accession of General Grant; and that the inquiries may be thorough, it is essential that an able lawyer should be chairman of the committee.

Under the present administration the navy has been comparatively the most costly department of the Government, the result, as we shall show, of placing unlimited power in the hands of Vice-Admiral Porter, when a nominal Secretary had been provided, first in Mr. Borie, and—after he had been driven out of office by the force of public opinion—then in Mr. Robeson, who, if possible, more completely under Porter's influence than ever Borie was. Borie did occasionally raise his voice in a feeble way, though only to be put down. Robeson, though he is said to have been a little resolute about the annual report, does not even whisper remonstrance on more serious subjects.

As evidence of the reckless extravagance of the de facto head of the navy, we may mention, first, the removal of the four-bladed screws from several steamers, and the substitution of the French Mangin screw, which has proved as utter failure. The Mosholm, renamed the Severn, was detained about four months in the Brooklyn Navy Yard to await her new screw, and after she had been docked three times it was discovered that the Mangin screw could not be made to work. The cost of this single job was undoubtedly over \$100,000, and not less than half a million has thus been squandered on different ships, to their serious injury. The Mangin screws having been removed, plain two-bladed screws are now put on in place of the original four-bladed screws. As the two-bladed screws have the same diameter, lengths, and pitches as the four-bladed ones, their motive power, as every engineer knows, will be less. But as it was considered necessary to change something, the screws were changed first from four-bladed ones that were the best in use to Mangin screws that were comparatively worthless, and then back again to two-bladed ones that are not half as good as the four-bladed if the vessel is intended for steam propulsion alone; though better perhaps if sails are to be used ordinarily, and steam as only an accessory power.

It will scarcely be believed that this whole subject had already been exhausted by the British Government, which made an extensive and elaborate series of trials of the various screws in use, including the Mangin screw, with the gunboat Stork and the large steam frigate Shannon, the results in the British experiments being invariably in favor of the four-bladed.

After trying his "pretence hand" on screws, Admiral Porter's next exploit was to order the conversion of the paddle-wheel steamers Susquehanna and Powhatan into screw steamers.

Two worn-out, old wooden vessels, built nearly a quarter of a century ago, and now obsolete in model, are to be revamped, the still excellent paddle-wheel machinery taken out and broken up, and new screw machinery put in! The cost of these alterations when completed will not be less than three-quarters of a million of dollars each. The new machinery alone will cost about half of that money. Meanwhile, several new vessels are lying idle at the navy yards, for which the machinery about to be placed in the old paddle-wheel steamers was originally constructed. These new vessels are among the finest of their class ever built, and are duplicates of the above examples will suffice to open the eyes of civilians to the manner in which the funds of the Navy Department are squandered. When the Board of Survey bill is passed, and Admiral Porter is thereby made a sort of First Lord of the Admiralty, he will undoubtedly use his power to alter, improve, and economize on a still greater scale, and the country will find to its sorrow that change does not always mean improvement. Experience, science, technical knowledge, are as nothing in comparison with the vanity of a man who imagines he knows everything *ex officio*, and who gives orders to ruin public property as he would to set sail on a ship. Can the taxpayers stand this? Will Congress permit it? Shall we have a First Lord of the Admiralty at such a price?

ARE THE ALABAMA CLAIMS LIKELY TO BE SETTLED?

From the N. Y. Times.

We cannot arrive at any reasonable answer to this question without properly comprehending the tone of public opinion in England. Our own position is clear enough. We know perfectly well what kind of settlement would content us as a people. But as there is another party to the dispute, it is necessary to find out in what temper the subject is approached on that side. And we cannot conceal from ourselves the fact that at this moment the English people are as little disposed as ever they were to make that full reparation which alone can wipe out the recollection of the wrong done to us during the Rebellion.

We do not attach too much importance to the views set forth by the English press. But at the same time we cannot deny that if all the public journals in the country unite in one expression of opinion, there is a fair presumption that they faithfully reflect the sentiment of the people. If we tried to put this sentiment into a few words, we should say that it amounted to this:—"We English have offered to pay all the money claims on account of the Alabama, but the apology which is demanded from us we cannot give." When it is answered, "Then you must take the consequences," the rejoinder comes back, "We must make the best of a very bad matter, and stand ready to fight if need be." Of course all this is shortsighted and foolish. But nations have fits of silliness and ill-temper like individuals, and England appears to be in one of them. She probably thinks that while it would be a very simple matter to pay the amount demanded by the owners of the vessels built by the Alabama, it is not so easy to bear the reproaches which the Secretaries of State cast upon her from time to time.

THE POSTAL TELEGRAPH—ASTONISHING THE AMERICAN EAGLE.

From the N. Y. Herald.

The words of Mr. Washburn, of Wisconsin, on the postal telegraph are apt and excellent. They have in them a downright common sense and a respect for facts that will not commend them to the class of hifalutin patriots; but they will furnish an excellent basis for the practical legislation that is aimed to secure the telegraph to the people, and not to the fortunes of jobs. Mr. Washburn made these cogent statements:—"I claim to have shown that the United States is the only enlightened nation on the globe that has not taken charge of the telegraph system, and nearly all have made it an appendage to the Post Office; that in the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Ireland a despatch of twenty words can be sent at a uniform rate of one shilling to any part of the kingdom, a distance of over seven hundred miles; from one extreme of France to another, about six hundred miles, for one franc or twenty cents; all over Belgium and Switzerland for half a franc, or ten cents; Denmark, twelve and a half cents; Prussia, from twelve and a half to thirty-seven and a half cents; Sweden and Norway, any distance for thirty cents for a message of twenty words, and one cent for each additional word that a message may be made to contain; from Marseilles, in the south of France, to the north of Scotland, a distance of fourteen hundred miles, traversing two kingdoms and crossing the Straits of Dover by submarine cable, for fifty-five cents. Yet in the face of these facts the Chairman of the Committee on Post Offices and Post Roads has told this House and the country, in a solemn report, that telegraphing in this country is the cheapest and most reliable in the world. Yet he could not have failed to know that if he desired to send a despatch of twenty words to his home in Illinois, and was not favored with a 'D. H.' pass, he would have to pay \$3; for a similar message to the home of the Missouri member of that committee \$4 would be charged; the Michigan member, \$2.80; the New Jersey member, \$1.25; the Massachusetts member, \$1.25; the Indiana member, \$2.50; the Kentucky member, \$2.50; the Nevada member, \$2.28; and the Oregon member, \$1.50; or \$5.70 more than it would cost to send a message of ten words from Washington to Constantinople by the Atlantic Cable and Continental lines."

Now, the worst of all this is that it is true. We are behind the age in the use of this great agency of modern civilization, at the very moment that we are plunging ourselves on our progressive spirit and on the way in which we are leading the nations, as we suppose. We have hurrahed so much and so long over the political advantages of our American system that we have well-nigh deafened ourselves to all mention and intimation that there may be something else important as well as a man's inalienable right to vote for his alderman. This is a common consequence of preoccupation of the arts of life—we are behind, and far behind, the nations over which we sometimes assume an impertinent superiority because of our political institutions, which would be excellent if they were not rottenly corrupt. In their railroads, despite our flurry of magnificence in sleeping cars; in their hotels, in their markets, in the general administration of justice, in the government of our cities, and in the general administration of our country, the people of Western Europe have everything to teach us, and little but chicanery and greedy extortion to learn from our example.

We hope the facts that Mr. Washburn has so clearly set forth may awaken the attention of the country to this most important subject of bringing our telegraphic system up to the spirit of the age; the more especially that just now the great monopoly, whose hold on the telegraph must be loosened, is manœuvring in the pulchritude of Congress for a continuance and extension of its power. Indeed, great

care is necessary to prevent the legislation now in progress touching Atlantic cables from resulting in that way. Mr. Sumner's bill, though satisfactory in its general spirit, is open to the charge of being aimed especially at the case of the French cable, and when it becomes a law it may be found some day that while it binds very closely the French company, yet that it is carefully worded with relation to correlative legislation to exempt from its position the other cables. If Congressional action thus discriminates against the French cable, it is because the French company has not yet surrendered to the Western Union Company. The only legislation in regard to the telegraph that is safe is such as apparently Mr. Washburn is ready to propose involving the proposition that the General Government shall assume the control of the telegraph under the postal power, and construct new lines.

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