SPIRIT OF THE PRESS.

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

THE IRISH POLITICAL PRISONERS.

of political offenders. If O'Donovan Rossa had

been treated from the first as a political

prisoner is to be treated by the new North

German Code, we should not have scrapled

to defend the Government had he even been

shot dead in any attempt to resist the orders

of his warders or to escape from his prison.

If every political prisoner were at once made

aware that from the moment of his convic-

tion he was to be treated absolutely

ing with political offenders inflicts on the

Irish nation? Here we are all of us ad-

mitting openly that a certain amount of at

least passive sympathy with Fenianism

pervades the whole popular spirit of

only too good-for that indisputable

fact, and yet allowing it to be published day

by day to the Irish nation that the punish-

ment which we inflict on the more violent

and active form of the very same feeling is

the punishment not of a firm but generous

enemy, but rather that of the moral contempt

and reprobation which we affix to mean crimes

and sordid motives. We assert that nothing

could be better calculated to keep alive the

flame of hatred in the Irish people than a

policy which brands the rebellious spirit of

Ireland just as it brands the conduct of the

murderer, the swindler, and the thief. Can

anything be better calculated to stimulate

the popular confusion between agrarian assas-

sinations and patriotic insurrections than the

mere fact that we treat the treason of the

Fenian and the murder of the assassin as if

they belonged to the same order of crime?

We confess that to us it seems a moral

scandal of the worst kind that the

treated with all the outward respect-

though with all the needful rigor and

we can gather, we feel exceedingly little per-

sonal sympathy with O'Donovan Rossa, be-

cause we can hardly avoid the conviction that

he has written the letter published in the

Marseillaise without any of that regard to

strict veracity which is essential to the honor

of a gentleman. But who can imagine for a

moment that the Irish people who put him forward as a symbol for their wishes and

hopes in the Tipperary election, will accept

the English Minister's version of the facts of

the case in preference to his? Of course they

will not, and of course every man with a

touch of disgust for English rule in his

breast, and a touch of admiration for the

-and how many of the true Irish people are

there without such a touch of feeling?-will

story of degradations such as they deem the

fitting penalties only of dishonorable crime.

"These English" they will say, "talk of

justice to Ireland, but they have not

moral conditions of justice to Ireland. They

cannot enter into the most elementary feel-

ings of Irishmen. They cannot treat us even

as brave enemies. They dishonor us all in

dishonoring the men who, whatever their

rashness and their folly, have at least cared

so much more for a patriotic dream than for

personal safety and happiness, that they have

risked life and lost liberty for that dream.

Of necessary severity we should not complain.

Those who foment insurrection know the

cost, and must pay it. But of needless indig-

nity we do complain. These men are nobler

in

their breasts the requisite

resent, as if it were a personal insult, this

prisoners should

severity - of open enemies.

excuses-

not

From all

Ireland, and finding historical

From the London Spectator.

matter the more we feel the absolute need of recognizing frankly this tremendous sentimental grievance, and of strengthening rather than weakening the law against insur-The letter of O'Donovan Rossa, published rection, by treating political offenses found in the Marseillaise, and the partial refutation to have been committed without any disof it which has been officially communicated honorable motive as the North German Diet by the Home Secretary to the English newsis prepared to treat them—as a distinct class papers, ought to bring home to all Englishof offenses worthy, indeed, of severe represmen, and especially to the Liberal party in sion and punishment, but wholly distinct from ordinary crimes, and therefore not en-England, the miserable and reckless folly of our present law. It is probably the defect of tailing any social indignity. Mr. Disraeli's fanciful and almost absurd protest, on the our national temperament-the defect which of all others most disqualifies us for hearty first night of the session, against setting apart sympathy with our Irish fellow-subjects-that any prison in the United Kingdom as a poliwe are rather obtuse and stolid about matters tical prison, is nothing to the point. We imof feeling, that we often fail to enter heartily prison already many misdemeanants without into the most obvious distinctions between inflicting on them any marks of infamy. All one class of actions and another, that we conthe persons committed for trial but not yet found, for instance, hostility to the law due tried are imprisoned under similar conditions. to one motive with hostility to the law due to What possible need of a new class of prisons quite other motives, and not only treat both -if, indeed, it be so objectionable to con-fess to the need of it when we feel the as crimes-which is absolutely essentialbut treat both as crimes of the need of it-if a new class of prisoners will same kind, and as compelling us do? What we do want is to classify in a class to treat the criminals in the same manner. apart an unfortunately very old species of offenses, but to treat them in a new spirit; Now, no one who has done us the honor of reading our articles on the state of Ireland and in this to learn a lesson from the North during the last few months will imagine that German Diet. It is not too soon-it is only we are amongst those who can be supposed unfortunately very much too late-to confess for a moment to sanction any disposition to that we stand with relation to Irish republitrifle with the principle of authority. We cans too much in the same position in which called upon the Government to refuse the Germany stands towards German republicans pardon of the Fenian convicts-demanded, or Polish conspirators; and it would not be inopportune, it would be in the highest deas it was, in a spirit of violent and even insolent menace as an absolute right-long before gree opportune, to make this confession, at the refusal actually came. We have not the very time when we are trying hard to root scrupled to advise that even stern measures out the causes of a state of feeling that must, for the repression of outrage, when none by the very necessity of the case, long outothers seemed effectual, should accompany last the traditions and habits of injustice of the great remedial measures which Parlia which it was born. We may fairly say that ment has taken in hand. We are entirely Imperial necessities forbid even the consideclear, then, of any charge of advising or ration of separation between Great Britain approving administrative weakness in and Ireland. But the more we insist on this. Irish Government. But we feel none the less the more obviously we are bound to overcome strongly, perhaps even the more strongly on that insular obtuseness of feeling which is that account, that there is absolutely fatal obthe only excuse for treating political offenses tuseness in the policy of confounding, or apwith indignities that no sensitive race will pearing to Ireland to confound, the character willingly forgive or easily forget. of political crimes, such as those of which the Fenians have been guilty, with the ordi-COMMODORE VANDERBILT'S LETTER. nary moral crimes for which sentences of From the N. Y. World. penal servitude are quite rightly inflicted. The best free-trade document lately pub-Nor do we say this with the least intention lished is the letter of Commodore Vanderof weakening-on the contrary, with the hope bilt to President Felton, denying his signaof greatly strengthening-the promptitude ture to the petition of Pennsylvania railroad and courage of the Executive in the represmen for an increase of the duty on steel sion of political outbreaks and the restraint rails.

in casting insults on them you render us im-

placable. How can we be reconciled to a gov-

ernment which offers us justice with one

hand and casts insuit upon us with the other?"

We confess that the more we consider the

but pro tanto went against the interest of without moral indignity, but with all the restraints usually deemed necessary all layers of steel rails and all riders over them, and all who send or use freight carried for prisoners of war or midemeanants over them. of the first class, and that any attempt to break through these restraints The argument of the Pennsylvanians is that home competition is the only defense would be punished with military rigor, the from foreign extortion. The Commodore, Irish political convicts would not only be with his wide and long experience of men and their ways, replies that he has not found quite as safe as they now are, but there would have been nothing like the same inducements extortion an exclusive characteristic of the to the Government to find excuses of a some-British or Prussian steel-rail seller. He has what slender character for remitting their met persons capable of extortion on this side punishment, or to evade the prosecution and the Atlantic; and what if it should turn out conviction of new offenders. It is the that domestic extortionists happened to own reflected consciousness which, in some dim domestic steel-rail works? Competition, inform, the Irish indignation at their treatment deed, the Commodore believes in as the true excites in English politicians' breasts, that defense against extortion, but, since extorthere is a real injustice in this system of not tion is to be guarded against wherever men simply restraining and punishing, but dehave the power to extort, the widest competigrading rash and mischievous patriots, that tion is the best defense against anybody's ex-tortion at home or abroad. Monopoly of steelso often holds our hands from taking adequate measures to assert the authority of the rail selling here might be got by higher dulaw. What, indeed, can be more inconsistties; but that, if preventing foreign extortion, ent and absurd than the blindness of English would guarantee Pennsylvania extortion. liberals to the great and very just and senti-Free trade in steel rails would prevent foreign mental grievance which this mode of deal-

> This is the reasoning underlying Commodore Vanderbilt's letter, which is expressed with the terseness of a man who knows exactly where his interest lies and can't be humbugged by any plausible gammon of "protection;" and it carries the weight of the three railroad corporations which first used steel rails, and which have used one-fifth of all laid down and one-third of all imported.

extortion because of home competitors, and

home extortion because of foreign compe-

A clearer head to discern his interest, or

the interest of any corporation under his con-

trol, than that which the Commodore carries

upon his shoulders is not now extant; and

one of the sharpest points in his letter is that

in which he shows, with perfect courtesy,

that in their petition the Pennsylvania rail-

road men may have been faithful to any

interest of theirs in Pennsylvania steel-works.

It is exactly in the protectionist vein, now that the Bessemer steel process has become free to all the world and lowered the price everywhere of steel-rail making, to petition Congress to cheat 40,000,000 people out of that benefit by a duty for the benefit of forty steel-rail makers. We propose Commodore Vanderbilt for the next President of the Free Trade League.

USING THE ARMY TO STOP GOLD-MINING.

From the N. Y. Sun.

Among American gold-miners, from Frazer river to San Diego, there is a fixed belief that the portion of the continent richest in gold, and most accessible to the pick, the pan, and the arastra, is the Wind river mountains. They have been prospected; and some of the adventurous men who took their lives there with their outfits survived the peril, came out with their hair, and at innumerable camp-fires have told the tale which has kindled a fever of desire and of curiosity wherever in the United States the color of gold is seen. These mountains flank a portion of the huntinggrounds of the Sioux and Cheyennes. They contain no game on which the Indians sub sist. They are merely the park walls of these red gentlemen's hunting-parks. Some white men in Wyoming, being poor but industrious, propose to get to the top of these walls and pick for gold. Brevet Major-General C. C. Augur says they shan't do it. He has written to Governor Campbell, of Wyoming Territory, that he has received orders "to inform Quixotic courage of the Fenian insurrection the parties concerned that the Government will not permit its treaty obligations with the Indians to be violated, and to advise them to abandon their purpose, and in any event to

see that this expedition does not go. A treaty between the people of the United States and a tribe of Plain Indians which gives to the latter the right to exclude American citizens from the gold in the Rocky Mountains cannot, in the nature of things have any sanction among a mining popula-The reasonableness of a treaty with buffalo-eating Indians, fencing in for their exclusive occupation by meridians of longitude and parallels of latitude a portion of the buffalo range, would be understood by all men, and the treaty would be observed by most. But the "treaty obligations" which General Augur speaks of would seem to indicate a compact by our Government with a band of savages that the gold and silver in the Wind River mountains shall not be taken than many of us, for they acted on the imout for the commerce of the world. It is a

United States shall remain unexplored and | the other. None did more discredit to the dence or too little courage to act upon. And unknown to its Government and its people. It is a compact that the Wind River chain shall exist as an obstruction to American travel and commerce. For what is this compact made?

It is made to enable a tribe of Indians to keep a preserve of wild game unscared by white men. It is made to enable the males of a race which abhors agriculture, and would sooner starve than plough and hoe, to gorge on buffalo-hump and elk-rib; to sleep, to dance, to paint their faces; to flutter the scalps of white women and men taken on the emigrant trails; to brag of the horses they have stolen, and the enemies they have surprised in sleep, or slain in unequal battle; to overwork and beat their women; and again to gorge, and again to sleep.

The common law makes contracts void for repugnance. Bear in mind that the Sioux and Cheyennes are Plain Indians, as distinguished from Thickwood Indians. They never walk. They always ride. They never climb a mountain save to look off upon a plain for game or for a foe. In winter only they camp among the foot-hills for shelter from the winds. Their lives are passed on grass. They live on the flanks of the columns of buffaloes in their ranges from the Arkansas to the Saskatchewan. Granting for a moment that they have a right to live this life against the right of civilization to permanently occupy the soil, are the Wind River mountains essential to that mode of life? Eight hundred miners in Chevenne say they are not essential, and they are going to march for those mountains with mining outfits and seven hundred and fifty rounds of ammunition per man. They do not mean to interfere with the Indians' hunting parks, but only to look for gold in the mountains, where the Indians do not go. It would not surprise us to see General Grant make the mistake of using soldiers to stop these people. If it were possible to teach him political truth, we would say to him that that mistake belongs to those which defeat political aspirations and kill candidates in nominating conventions. Let the Government keep the engagements of its treaties; let it protect the hunting grounds of the Indians; but let the gold and silver of the mountains be got out.

THE FUTURE.

From the St. Louis Democrat.

The adoption of the fifteenth amendment has now been formally proclaimed. Texas, the last of the rebellious States, has completed organization upon a loyal basis, and gained admission. Actual disorder in Georgia, with the efforts of factionists to make the most of that disorder, keep that State still unrepresented, but we may now hope that Senators and Representatives will realize the folly of pretending to fear some denial of the rights secured to the colored people. With the adoption of the fifteenth amendment it becomes forever impossible to deny, and suicidal for any party to resist, their claim to the right of suffrage, and with the establishment of that right, and of the loyal governments in all the States, based upon impartial suffrage, the General Government has discharged its duty, and provided in the long run the best possible security for the protection of the colored citizens as such. this time forward, whatever it may do to prevent disorder in any quarter must be done not for the negro but for the citizen, irrespective of color. Whatever measures may be needed to restore or preserve civil order ought to be not measures of reconstruction. legitimate reconstruction is ended, but measures for the enforcement of the law. These great questions, therefore, negro suffrage and reconstruction, which have engrossed so much of pubattention, are now settled. and forever put beyond the range of intelligent discussion or legitimate political action. The Reconstruction Committee in Congress ought to be instantly disbanded. Its proper work is done. It has no more business to exist than the Anti-Slavery Society. If there are any legislators who have been thinking about reconstruction and the negro question so long and so intently that they are incapable of thinking of anything else, they ought to be called back from completed labors by a grateful people to the repose of private life. In this world the man who can do only yesterday's work is of no use to anybody.

What is the work of to-day? It is to wipe out the political disabilities imposed for the safety of the country during the period of reconstruction and enfranchisement. Until the negro had been empowered to protect himself by the ballet: until the Southern States had been restored with governments based upon impartial suffrage, these disqualifications were deemed necessary. It was held that certain of those who had participated in rebellion should have no voice in settling the terms of peace, or the questions raised by the war. That reasoning is now out of date. Those questions are forever settled. Disfranchisement is no longer a measure of safety; it is simply an irritant and a cause of trouble and danger. The perfect peace which all good citizens desire, and which only noxious demagogues seek to delay, may now be hastened by the removal of all disabilities from those who participated in the rebellion.

We trust that the President may speedily recommend such a measure, and that its supporters, the Republicans in Congress, will be prompt to propose and to pass it. Take a esson, gentlemen, from the radicals of Missouri! They do not wait to give Democrats a chance to overpower them or divide them on this issue, but resolve to take the matter into their own hands, and to put through, as a radical measure, the repeal of the disqualifications which were imposed, justly when they were necessary, by radical votes. Let the Republican party, also, carry out to the letter the resolution in the Chicago platform, offered by Senator Schurz, and complete the plorious work of restoring the nation to peaceul self-government on the basis of equal

DISTINCTION AND DIFFERENCE.

From the N. Y. Times. Nothing is more natural than that the World, hotly committed as it is to one side, should deprecate anything like a judicial examiration of the quarrel between Tammany and the "Young Democracy." If it could be shown that either party to the controversy was absolutely and entirely in the right, we could sympathize with the World's condemnation of either dissidence or lukewarmness. This main issue, however, is so far from being settled, that intelligent observers who belong to neither of the contending factions must almost necessarily adopt a tentative attitude. We observed on Sunday, in substance, that the leaders of the Democracy" were clever men, and that the leaders of Tammany were very hard to beat. The World objects to this conjuncture, and evidently thinks we were bound in uttering one compliment to suppress the other. We fail to see the propriety of this, not only because both statements seem to us to be true, but because the suppression of the tribute to pulses which we had either too much pru- compact that a considerable section of the leither combatant would really be unfair to

military abilities of General Grant than the critics who discouraged those of General Lee. Besides this the World should have too much sagacity to forget that it is in a position very much like that of the bird which befouls its own nest. For years it has defended, applauded, and associated itself with the interests of those whom it now so vehemently assails. The gentlemen of the "Ring" were angels of light yesterday in the same eyes to which they are incarnate fiends to-day. Our contemporary should blame neither the public nor ourselves for taking with its present furious declarations the same salt with which we seasoned its former strikingly opposite ones. Matters of detail, as regards the new charter, or any-thing else, we may approve or oppose on their merits without reference to the particular wing of the Democracy that advocates them; but we are not yet prepared to recognize those nice distinctions in moral character or devotion to the public weal as between the "ring" and the "young Democracy," whereof the World is so late a discoverer and so fervent an enunciator. We cannot pretend to say what may be in store for us hereafter, but have a right to affirm that our present experience does not warrant the delicate discrimination that to our neighbor appears so public spirited and legitimate.

BROTHERLY LOVE.

From the N. Y. Tribune. A goodly and pleasant city is that of Brotherly Love. An excellent place to live in, the absence of superfluous enterprise would make it the most comfortable of towns to die in. It is an elderly city, with the mustiness and rust and flavor of old-time independence, yet retaining all the verdure of its Quaker tradition of "a greene countrie towne." Travellers speak of its brick gentility and cobbled respectability; and its colleges, hospitals, and asylums are known beyond the State of Pennsylvania. People wonder that the public life of such a multitudinous, rectangular city should be, we will not say stupid, but dull. Why is it that Independence Hall is so far in the rear of Fancuil Hall? A city boasting the cracked bell which rang out "liberty to the land and to the inhabitants thereof," ought to be, in this day of the fifteenth amendment, the very headquarters of ideas.

Just here, however, is the difficulty. Philadelphia-and we say it with a subdued veneration-is not, not to put too fine a point on it, a city of ideas. Never was so extensive a collection of admirable homes, of charming middle-class intelligence, of neat aristocracy, of honest artisans, with so poor and dull a public life. Honest Mr. Pumblechook sits in her chair of state and presides at her dinners. No men so genial at a repast as her City Fathers. Her great men about town are particularly fond of terrapin. Her speakers are post-prandial: her journalists-well, her journalists are a noble band of brethren, who wonder in their hearts what is that keeps this goodliest of cities from being the true Athens of America, the home of painters, sculptors, bookwriters, poets, and leaders of all kinds. Delicacy forbids that we should answer so abstruse a question. Can we forget, however, that Philadelphia was the home of Brockden Brown?-of such painters as Sully and Neagle?-of such lawyers as Binney and Sergeant? Does not Hamilton still point for it sunrise and sunset? Is not Carevits philosopher and Boker its bard? Is it not the city of the Union League? All the more shame for it, then, since it also boasts an Academy of Music, which is at discord with the ideas of the nineteenth century, and which teaches that the music of the Union still needs the clang of chains to give effect to its orchestra.

The Directors of the Philadelphia Academy of Music will spare us any further trouble of illustrating how the public life of that noble city is stupid. Will it be believed that in this year of grace the twelve gentlemen having charge of that favorite institution of the city of benevolence, independence, religion, the Union League, and Brotherly Love, refused to allow a Senator of the United States to lecture there because he is black? The very Capitol might be accorded him, but not this academy. The nation's Senators might hear him, but not the conscript stockholders of Philadelphia. Doors that have opened to the admirers of the nude ballet and the obscene opera bouffe have been shut against Senator Revels. Another academy of Philadelphia gave from its professors a United States Minister to Hayti; but this academy turns away a Senator from Mississippi. All that these Republican (not Democratic) directors care to say for themselves is that to do otherwise would be "inexpedient." Thus is the fifteenth amendment celebrated in the city of independence, among the men who urged to the war the heroes of Olustee and Wagner, and in the community which sent Ebenezer Bassett to Hayti. Will somebody have the goodness to pinch its Rip Van Winkles? Are we quite sure now that a negro can ride in a Philadelphia car? Who knows but that, one of these fine days, a wandering colored man may be suddenly arrested and sent South by some venerable Philadelphian who has forgetten all about the proclamation of freedom? Who can tell? The thin-minded people who gave their verdict against Senator Revels, and then sank back to inanity, really forgot the fifteenth amendment, or, if they knew it, they forgot themselves. Inno large sense have they managed to exclude Mr. Revels, for their act has given him a broader stage and a greater audience; but they have shut out themselves effectually from the respect of men of common sense. Here are the names of them!

President-James C. Hand. Tressuer and Secretary—James Farquhar, erdinand J. Dreer, Thomas Sparks.
James L. Claghorn.
James S. Claghorn.
Daniel Haddock, Jr., John P. Steiner, George S. Pepper, Frederick Graff. Henry M. Phillips.

SPECIAL NOTICES.

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