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

EASTERN AND WESTERN POLITICIANS. From the N. Y. Times.

The Buffalo Express calls attention, and with much lamentation, to the contrast pre-sented by the efforts of the people of Illi-nois to amend their Constitution and those made by the unhappy citizens of New York two years ago. The contrast is, indeed, suffi-ciently humiliating. We got our Constitu-tional Convention together with as much fuss as the Illinois men, if not with more, as our facilities of calling the attention of mankind to our doings are far greater than those of any Western State. We sent to it as delegates a great many excellent and eminent men; but it proved a very helpless body. It could hardly agree on anything; its reforms were of the very mildest kind. Some of those who went there, pledged to deliver the State from all its evils, were found, on trial, to be afraid to vote for any change whatever, and were indeed apparently in doubt, all through the dens, whether their souls were their liberatio own. The Constitution they finally drew up was considered, as a reform, as harmless as new milk. It could not have hurt a community of babes to have tried it. But when it was submitted to the people, it was found that there was scarcely enough interest felt to get a vote on it at all; and what interest was felt in it appears to have belonged mainly to those who were opposed to all change. The judiciary clause, on which, luckily, a separate vote was ordered, was saved, but rather owing to the over-confidence of its opponents than to the zeal of its friends.

When we compare all this with the action of Illinois, we can certainly hardly avoid the conclusion that mental and moral vigor has been following the march of empire, and that the work of reform, like many other kinds of work, is going to be better done in the Mis-sissippi Valley than on the Atlantic coast. New York led the way in the great democratic movement which resulted in the Constitution of 1846, under which we are now living, and her example was followed by a great many States. But what State would follow her example now, or where is her political action spoken of except as a warning? Illinois was, perhaps, a year ago laboring under as great a load of abuses as any State in the Union. Its very vitals were being eaten out by what are the curses of all States-legislative corruption, special legislation, and the granting of public money in aid of private enterprises. It called a Constitutional Convention, and sent good men to it; and the debates, instead of being a series of wrangles between tricky politia series of wrangles between tricky point cians, anxious about their "record," and so excited about "the nigger" as to have little time or attention for anything, or of orations from "lofty enthusiasts," were marked by good sense, shrewdness, reflection, a fore-sight and a wideness of information such as have not been displayed in this country on any similar occasion for many a long day. Moreover, nobody was afraid to touch things. Abuses were takenup one after another, and subjected to radi-cal treatment. There are no half measures in the entire Constitutiou. The experience not only of the State, and of the other States, but of all other nations, was turned to account. and the result was a just law, which thus far has no match. It is difficult to overestimate the importance of one portion of the experiment-the minority representation clause. Should it prove on trial a success-that is, should the political tricksters prove unable to use it in the prosecution of their trickery—it is safe to say it will bring in a new era in American politics, and introduce into public life a class of men who are among the most valuable in the community, and who now find it impossible to get a nomination. Now, the instrument was just such a one as any average politician would have been sure to tell us that the people would reject. It was full of innovations and new-fangled notions; it offended a great many interests, and ran counter to a great many prejudices, and took from the hands of political managers a great many dearly-loved tools. In any State on the Eastern sea-board it would, we venture to say, have been voted down, and it would have taken only a very small vote to do it, so great would have been the apathy about it, or the fear of it. But the people of Illinois went at it, and adopted it from top to bottom, minority representation and all, by a large majority, and now bid defiance to all classes of jobbers and swindlers at present in existence. New ones will doubless arise, but we venture to say they have found their match in Illinois. laws? We think it would be difficult to overestimate the effect this will have on the people of other States. It will do much to remove the apathy as to reform which the doings of the New York Constitutional Convention and of the Massachusetts Legislature have of late helped to spread over the East. A feeling has grown up among us of late that the process of demoralization which our constitutions underwent in 1846, and the succeeding years, was a kind of last appeal to the people, and that this having failed, there was nothing left for us but to pray; that there was no use in trying to get the people to set things to rights. Illinois has, we trust, dissipated that delusion, and shown that in a democracy, as well as under other forms of governmentnay, more readily than under other forms of government-thorough-going reform is pos-sible. It seems, too, as if the good beef and good bread and good air of the Northwest were making men better politicians, as well as more energetic farmers and railroad men and speculators. One can hardly help noticing among the Eastern, as compared with the Western men, a decrepid love of old ways and a kind of servile fancy for well-established abuses. Even Eastern radicals are either weak and vapid in their extravagance, or exhale their zeal in vituperation and bombast rather than in action. Let us be thank-ful that there is good rich blood forming somewhere.

with regard to the spieland passenger steam-ers, many of which also have a fine trade in first-class freight, is the statement of the whole case with regard to French and Ger-man commerce. Each nation has naval power enough to drive the mercantile marine of the other from the seas. What shall become of the numerous trade thus done-and come of the numerous trade thus done—and of the great number of ships engaged in it that are not fit for war, and ought not to rot in blockaded ports? England already has covetous eyes on this great trade, and in the assumption "that business will fall to neutral flags" the Government is urged to remain neutral despite every possible complication that may arise.

British neutrality in this war will no doubt result greatly to the advantage of the British shipping trade, and for this reason alone every nerve will be strained to keep Great Britain out of the Continental struggle.

Will this effort be successful? It is doubtful. Already we hear that neutrality will be inconsistent with the honor of England if the Low Countries seem to be in danger, and this reference to the fact that England is one of the powers that guarantee the independ-ence of Belgium is too plain for misconcep-tion. Again, we hear the intimation that England morally stands behind Prussia, and that any sign of failure on the part of the latter power will draw England into the strug-gle. The very fact that these things are canvassed renders the neutrality of English ships uncertain, and so unsafe, and the probability is that the United States alone will have it within its power to reap all the harvest of this war. Indeed, this is a change that is justly due us in the whirligig of time; for as one war destroyed our commerce and built up the maritime trade of some European ports at our expense, it is but proper that another war should build up our trade again at the expense of the commerce of Europe.

But it is not only from the effects of our war that our commerce is prostrate. It was stricken down by the war; but it has been kept down by the inconceivable folly of certain of our laws-laws like the compact with Shylock-framed to "protect" certain inte-rests, to give those interests their pound of flesh, though this could only be done at the expense of the whole body from which the flesh must be cut. Before, therefore, war in Europe can give us again that of which war in America deprived us, we must first set aside these most foolish, villanous, pocket-picking laws; these laws framed to enrich ten men and starve ten thousand; laws which declare that this great nation shall own no ships except it can make terms with Mr. Kelley, of Pennsylvania, and a few more men of his kidney; laws only second in atrocity to those slave laws that the nation has recently torn out of its life at such frightful cost; laws whose authors and supporters, if the slaveholder deserved all the opprobrium cast upon him, should be stoned in the streets of every city of the republic. The world has for not many generations seen

The world has for not many generations seen a more bewildering, confounding spectacle of imbecility, of downright inability to com-prehend and grasp a simple thought, than that shown by the United States Congress when its attention was properly called to this sub-ject on Friday last. The President, by special message, pointed out the opportunity, and hinted at the way we could improve it, but his words fell on minds prececupied with another thought. What was this grand thought that left no room even for the proposition to erase the last great disadvantage left by the war? It was the reflection of every member that he had his ticket in his pocket, that he had made up his mind to go home, that he did not want to be delayed and stop for the bother of any more legislation, however imperatively necessary for the interests of the nation; and in this pitiful haste to get away, and for this puerile reason, the Congress of the United States turned a deaf ear to one of the most important messages that ever came to it from the Executive. Some members there were who proposed a measure that might have covered case; but Mr. Kelley, of Pennsylthe vania, was there, standing, as one might suppose, bludgeon in hand, determined that the nearly lifeless body of Ameri-can commerce should not rise while he could strike, and in the criminal indifference of the mass of members to their duty he was able to kill the proposition that was made. Such, then, is the patriotism of the Republi-can party, and such is the contrast between its conduct in the presence of a real national emergency and the ready attention it once gave to the nigger and now gives to every form of corrupt jobbery. Shall our opportu-nity pass because of a recreant and imbecile Congress, or must the Government study means to evade the operation of oppressive

the "Compagnie Generale Transatlantique," and these must stop, for there is also a Pras-sian man-of-war not far away. And this statement of the case with regard to the splendid passenger steammatter how heroically Denmark might bear herself, no sooner had the unequal war begun than from all parts of the world the children of the Vikings hurried home to take part in it. From Australia and California, from it. From Australia and California, from India and Peru, the Danes went back to bat-tle. They left their new lives, their busy hopes, their industries, their fortunes, and carried all they had and all they were, to lay it on the altars of their native land. Their devotion was in vain, so far as its immediate object was concerned. But it was none the less honorable in itself and quickening as an example.

We have no fear that in measurably imitating this transcendent display of patriotism our German fellow-citizens will seek to make their adopted home a party to a strife as to the real scope and bearings of which not even the Germans themselves can as yet pretend to have any very clear and positive convic-tions. It is all very well for Napoleon in his address to his people to bid the world remem-ber that the "victors of Jena still survive." So, too, do the victors of Waterloo. But this is not the age of Jena or of Waterloo. Not even in so great a war as we now see opening before us can the existence of a great State like Prussia or like France be now put at stake. What the most bril-liant modern genius of Germany, Heine, said of the "sunny-marble-face" of the first Napoleon-"those lips had but to whistle and Prussia ceased to be"-can never be said again in our day. In the worst event to Prussia of the present war, all that she would have to fear would be displacement from her present position at the head of imperfectly united Germany. Granted the failure of the Prussian experiment, now only four years old, and who need, therefore, despair either of the future of the German States, or of a real, free, and harmonious German unity, planned after another fashion, crystallizing perchance around another central German State? Such a thing as an invasion and conquest, or even an extravagant humiliation of Germany, being quite out of the question, our sympathizing Germans of the New World can afford to abstain from exaggerating the significance of a conflict the mere proportions of which it is indeed not easy at all to exaggerate.

THE AMERICAN PRINCIPLES OF MARI-TIME WAR.

From the N. Y. Tribune.

During the present war between France and Prussia three of the principal steamship lines connecting America with Europe will have to suspend their trips. If Great Britain should be drawn into the struggle, all the steamers may be shut up in harbor. The loss and inconvenience will not be confined to the belligerents, but will fall heavily upon neutrals who have no concern in the war, and generally upon private persons. In the operations of armies most civilized nations respect private property when it is not ne-cessary to seize it for military reasons; but on the sea many of the old barbarous customs of a primitive era still prevail.

The United States have always endeavored to soften the rules of maritime law, and during the present generation many of our principles respecting seizures and the rights of neutrals have been adopted by the European nations. At the time of the Crimean war France and England waived their right to confiscate an enemy's goods found on board neutral vessels, and also neutrals' goods not contraband of war found in enemies' vessels. By the treaty of Paris in 1856, these principles were formally ratified by Great Britain, France, Prussia, Austria, Sardinia, Russia, and Turkey, and privateer-ing was at the same time abolished among the parties to the declaration. The United States Government was asked to assent to this agreement, and gave a ready approval to all except the privateering clause; but Mr. Marcy, then Secretary of State, presented a counter-proposition. "If you," he wrote, "will make all private property exempt from capture at sea, we will cease privateering; but why ask us to abolish it while you maintain and send out your great ships of war. which are neither more nor less than privateers? They go forth to do exactly the same things as the ships that we license in time of war to burn, plunder, and destroy." France, Russia, and several other powers were disposed to accept this proposition; but Great Britain refused, and after some time negotiations were suspended. A strong feeling had meanwhile been aroused in the United States in relation to the right of blockade, which we contended ought to be restricted to naval arsenals and towns which were at the same time besieged by an army on land-in other words, that a blockade should be a strictly military operation, and not an embargo upon trade. "We must obtain the consent of the powerful naval nations," wrote President Buchanan to the New York Chamber of Commerce, "that merchant vessels shall not be blockaded in port, but be suffered to pass the blockading squadron and go out to sea." Seceetary Cass in 1859 addressed a circular to the American representatives at the European capitals, instructing them to negotiate for an agreement on this basis; but again our efforts for reform were frustrated by the refusal of Great Britain. If our proposals had been adopted, France and Prussia would have been spared the present suspension of their ocean steam lines, and Great Britain would have no Alabama claims to pay. There can be no more appro-priate time than this to revive the subject. In the light of the last few years' experience Great Britain may be inclined to take a different view of the matter, and we suggest that General Grant should instruct Mr. Frelinghuysen to broach the subject as soon as he reaches London.



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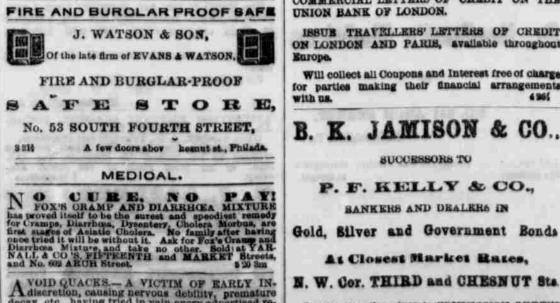
THE OPPORTUNITY OF THE UNITED STATES.

From the N. Y. Herald.

Our commerce should be just now the leading subject of national attention. In the present juncture of the world's affairs there appears the opportunity that, rightly improved, might not only restore to us the maritime strength that was swept away in our great war, but out of which also we might secure a start that would easily enable us to distance within a few years every rival power. At this moment there are twenty-six German steamers carrying passengers between ports in Europe and the United States. All these must stop at the very mention of the presence outside of a French cruiser. Sailing from hope the most striking manifestation this port also are all the splendid steamers of of this instinct which our times.

GERMAN SYMPATHIES IN AMERICA. From the N. Y. World.

A number of the most respectable German residents of New York have called a meeting of their countrymen for Wednesday evening, to express their sympathy with Prussia in the great war now beginning. Nothing could be more natural, or in many respects more com-mendable. The maxim that "blood is thicker than water," though often honored, we are sorry to say, rather in the breach than in the observance by Americans of both sections during our recent civil war, lies, after all, deep in the heart of every vigorous and re-spectable race of men. Indeed, a race which does not feel it and live by it in all great emergencies can hardly be vigorous, and need not hope to be respectable. The prompt and passionate way in which all France, for example, from sea to sea, is even now responding to it, must command the admiration even of her enemies; and it dominates, as we see, in Prussia, even the profound and righteous hostility of all that is truly liberal and enlightened in that country to the insolent and intolerant autocracy of King William's Government. All Germans, indeed, are not even nominally Prussians; but all Prussians are nominally Germans, even to the Poles of Posen, we suppose, and the Danes of Holstein; so that sympathy with Germany may naturally enough seem to Germans far removed from the scene of strife necessarily to involve sympathy with Prussia. Of course, no expression of such sympathy can be rigidly interpreted to mean intelligent approval either of the way in which Prussia has attempted to Prussianize Germany by force, or of the recent diplomacy of the Hohenzol lerns beyond the Pyrenees. It is simply a loud God-speed, a ringing Hoch, sent up by Germans who honor their German fatherland with love in the security of their cisatlantic homes, to other Germans contending for life and death with the hostile legions of France. Our American residents in Europe used to solace their souls in like manner with hearty demonstrations at Paris and London while the cannon were reverberating incessantly along the Potomac and the Mississippi. Per-baps the most striking manifestation



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