

Evening Telegraph

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THURSDAY, SEPTEMBER 1, 1870.

THE EVENING TELEGRAPH, from its original establishment, has been in the receipt of telegraphic news from the New York Associated Press, which consists of the Tribune, Times, Herald, World, Sun, Journal of Commerce, Evening Post, Commercial Advertiser, and Evening Express. The success which has attended our enterprise is, in itself, a sufficient evidence of the freshness, fullness, and reliability of the news which we have received from this source. We have now entered into a special contract by which THE EVENING TELEGRAPH has the exclusive use of the news furnished in the afternoon by the Associated Press to its own members, the North American, Inquirer, Ledger, Press, Age, Record, and German Democrat, of this city, and the leading journals of the East, North, West and South; and hereafter THE TELEGRAPH will be the only evening paper published in this city in which the afternoon despatches of the Associated Press will appear.

The earliest regular edition of THE EVENING TELEGRAPH goes to press at 1 1/2 o'clock, and the subsequent regular editions at 2, 3, and 4. Whenever there is important news of the progress of the European war, extra editions will be issued after this hour, and before the regular time for the early edition.

THE WAR NEWS.

The uncertainties in regard to the late operations of the French and German armies have been nearly cleared up in the usual manner—a despatch from King William announcing that "our Fritz" has achieved another victory. We do not yet know whether it has been decisive. But it has evidently thwarted MacMahon's attempt to relieve or release Bazaine. It has also destroyed the hope expressed by the Parisian journals that the Prussian armies would be fearfully crippled by grand strategic movements in and near the scene of the late battles, and it has compelled them to fall back upon speculations as to whether their fierce Marshal can run away from the foe he was expected to conquer. The French, although they were so badly beaten that they abandoned their works, may still succeed in getting a large portion of their army back to Paris before the Crown Prince can arrive there, and this is about the best hope left for forces which are manifestly unable to cope with the invaders in the open field.

The growing anxiety displayed in Europe about the terms of peace indicates that the end is drawing nigh. Germany insists that her own authorities shall be permitted to demand what they think requisite as indemnity for the past and security for the future, while foreign powers are itching for a chance to interfere. The French theory that peace can only be made after every German soldier is driven beyond the Rhine must give way to the inexorable logic of events; and Prussia seems to be determined to resist dictation from England, Italy, or Austria.

THE FREE VOTE SYSTEM.

SENATOR BOOKALEW, the champion of the cumulative vote system, is not satisfied with the title which is commonly given to it. He insists that it shall be called the free vote system, and he claims that it will not only secure representation to minorities, but that it will tend to relieve every citizen of the thralldom of cliques, to purify conventions and elections, to obviate the necessity of spending money to buy up "scalawags," and to bring a better class of men into the public service. He alleges that under the present system everything is sacrificed to gain the good-will of weak, wavering, or venal voters, and that "the party which will prostitute itself the most freely will win," whereas under a system that made the rights of the minorities absolutely secure, candidates would be selected on account of their intrinsic merits, and corruption funds would no longer be collected and expended. He contends that in American cities, especially, the proposed reform would prove very useful, and that if something of the kind is not adopted they will become "despotisms and nests of anarchy."

Like other enthusiasts he exaggerates the benefits of his favorite reform, but that it might do some good can scarcely be doubted; and that the times are so much out of joint as to require fundamental changes is clearly demonstrated by the annual recurrence of disgraceful proceedings at Harrisburg, and the increasing demoralization of the professional politicians. The State Constitution needs a thorough revision, and this can be made only by a convention. We require not only better men in the State Legislature, but more members, and under the cumulative or free vote system minorities would insure the election of at least some candidates who were neither fools nor knaves. The virtuous, intelligent, and patriotic voters of the State are now repeatedly overwhelmed by vicious and ignorant plunderers, who leave them only a fearful

choice between despicable Democrats and rascally Republicans; and it is high time that means were devised to put the powers of government in wiser and better hands.

While the general question of reform is up for consideration, there are several things connected with it, in addition to those discussed at the Reading Convention, which are worthy of reflection. First, if we are to continue the system of delegate elections and nominating conventions, they should be regulated by law, and the courts should be empowered to punish men who attempt to control them by fraud. Second, the whole array of talent should be made available to every constituency by abolishing laws requiring that the representative of any particular district must be a resident thereof. Third, the system of minority representation should be so arranged that any considerable body of men in any locality of the State, who have an interest or a grievance, may elect a representative by uniting their efforts. Let the coal operators, for instance, send one representative, if they can, and their operatives half a dozen; let railroad men have their representatives on the floor, and anti-railroad men have their firm friends in the Capitol; and let the miserable farce of sending a lot of mannikins to Harrisburg who are moved hither and thither by lobbyists and bribes cease to be a perpetual reproach upon the legislation of the Commonwealth.

WHAT DOES IT MEAN?

The important order issued from the Navy Department a few days ago "for a more economical administration of the naval service" reads like a declaration of independence on the part of the Secretary. Admiral Porter, who has been Secretary de facto ever since the present administration came into power, is now enjoying the breeze of Narragansett, and the hitherto nominal Secretary, whose name is George M. Robeson—a fact which we state for fear that our readers may have forgotten it—has taken advantage of the occasion to upset some of Porter's pet arrangements. It will be a subject for sincere congratulation if this order is something more than an exemplification of the adage that "when the cat's away the mice will play," and that Mr. Robeson intends hereafter to be something more than Porter's chief clerk. We believe, however, that he really does propose to assume the full duties and responsibilities of the Secretaryship, and if he can succeed during the balance of his term of office in undoing some of Porter's mischief, he will deserve the cordial thanks of the navy and the country.

When Admiral Porter came into power at the Navy Department he caused to be assigned to active duty of some kind or other nearly all the officers on the retired list. Boards to superintend or investigate every imaginable subject were organized, and superannuated admirals, commodores, captains, and other officers were ordered to them under full pay, whereas under the law these officers on the retired list, if unemployed, would only be entitled to one-half of the highest sea pay of the grade in which they might be retired. That is to say, an admiral on the retired list, who had been retired as captain, would be ordered to duty draw admiral's pay, whereas, if unemployed, he would only draw one-half of the sea pay of a captain. The duty to which most of the retired officers have been assigned under the present administration is merely nominal, and much of it has been devised for no other purpose than to allow them to draw the full pay of their nominal rank. Admiral Porter's object in this arrangement was twofold. He desired to place these old gentlemen in as comfortable circumstances as possible—which would have been eminently praiseworthy if the Government were not called upon to foot the bill—and he was anxious to concentrate as large a force as possible of the older officers of the navy at Washington, in order to use them in influencing Congress to defeat the aspirations of the staff officers. Congress, in passing laws to regulate the retirement of naval officers, intended evidently to remove them from active duty, except in extraordinary cases, in order to give the younger men a chance for promotion and to cut down expenses. Admiral Porter's device, therefore, of placing most of the retired officers of high rank on active duty was a clear violation of the spirit if not of the letter of the law, and Secretary Robeson is obviously doing no more than his duty when he directs that "from and after the first of October next no retired officer of the navy shall be assigned to or remain upon active duty except as member of the Light-house Board, the board for examination of officers for promotion and for the retired list, and at the Naval Asylum; and all such officers not coming within the above exceptions, now on active duty, are relieved from that date."

The assignment of officers to duty as port admirals was another of Porter's moves. This idea, like many others with which the Admiral is afflicted, was borrowed from the English service, and it has no merit at all as applied to our naval system, except that it provides nominal duty with full pay for officers who would otherwise be unemployed. A sufficient reason for the discontinuance of the position of port admiral is to be found in the fact that confusion and enormous expense have attended the division of the authority and responsibility between officers ashore and afloat at our naval stations. The Secretary therefore orders that "the position of port admiral be hereby discontinued from and after the 1st of October, except at the port of New York."

It is estimated that this order of the Secretary of the Navy, if faithfully carried out in letter and spirit, will save annually at least \$112,000 to the country, while the real efficiency of the navy will be greatly promoted by the younger officers being called upon to do the active duty of the service, and no wrong will be done to the older officers who are retired under the laws of Congress.

Secretary Robeson, before he entered the Cabinet, had the reputation of being a man of pluck and spirit as well as ability, and it has therefore been a matter of surprise to his friends that he has so long submitted to the disparaging criticisms that have been launched against the Navy Department from all sides, when he could have demonstrated exactly how far he deserved them individually by dismissing the irresponsible adviser at his elbow who has been credited with being the active cause of all the mischief done in the navy during the last year and a half. Porter has been nominated for Admiral by the President, but as he will have to be confirmed by the Senate before he can receive the coveted commission, it may be that he thinks it advisable to let the Navy Department take care of itself without his running the risks of becoming any more unpopular than he already is, and thus damaging his prospects for the admiralty. It may be, also, that Secretary Robeson has got heartily tired of him, and has given him a hint to go about his business. But whether the Admiral has retired voluntarily or because he was compelled to, we are happy to believe Secretary Robeson's order means that the influence of Porter is at an end in the Navy Department.

TERRIFIC GALE.

A Buffalo Hurricane—Thrilling Adventures and Narrow Escapes—The Buffalo Courier gives the following account of the storm in the neighborhood of Buffalo a few days ago:—The city was visited yesterday by the most tremendous gale of the season. The early afternoon was quiet and pleasant, but about 3 o'clock the great black clouds began to gather, and the promontories of the gale were unmistakable. A little more than half an hour later the storm broke. The squall came from the southwest, and carried everything before it. The rain had not fallen in sufficient quantity to lay the dust, and the air was so darkened by its flying particles that it was impossible to see across the street.

DESTRUCTION OF THE OHIO STEEL BRIDGE. The most serious result of the storm was the destruction of the toll bridge over Buffalo river, near the junction of Ohio and Louisiana streets. When the gale was at its height there were on the bridge under a baker-wagon, driven by John Dier, of No. 224 Pine street, two wagons driven by men named Tainter and Leacock, engaged in drawing sand from the beach for Isaac Holloway, and a third wagon of the same sort, driven by a man named Carter, just entering the covered portion of the bridge from the draw on the city side. A squall struck the old bridge with such force as to utterly disrupt and smash it to kinders. The entire covered part of the structure was lifted up by the force of the gale several feet, and then swung with tremendous force to leeward. Never was a wreck made of iron and steel in a shorter space of time. Each plank and rafter was torn from its fastenings as by the fingers of a mighty giant; strong beams were rent asunder, and their pieces torn like paper by the irresistible power of the tornado; the whole bridge, which must be two hundred feet in length, was converted in an instant to an enormous and shapely mass of dislocated lumber and scattered over the river.

NARROW ESCAPE OF A SAILING PARTY. The gale overtook a party of ladies and gentlemen in a sail boat, on the lake, near the dummy light, and treated them to a thrilling experience which will doubtless prove the most fearfully memorable of their lives. The party consisted of Mr. J. P. Hoffman, Mr. Charles Shafer, Mrs. J. H. Fraser and Miss Ella Clark. While the storm was yet in the distance they noticed the vessels rapidly taking in sail, and Mr. Hoffman determined at once to make the lee of the light if possible. As the white caps approached him he hauled down the sail, leaving about three feet of it exposed to the breeze that he might be the better enabled to handle the boat. Before he could reach the point of safety, however, the squall struck the little craft, almost lifting her out of water, and capized her. In an instant the party were in the water, but for some seconds Mr. Shafer, who had become entangled in the sail, was not visible, and it was thought he had sunk to rise no more. Miss Clark, in being thrown into the water, got hold of the mast, which had become partially unstepped, and Mr. Hoffman directed his energies to the saving of Mrs. Fraser, who had fairly been washed away from the boat. When Mr. Shafer succeeded in extricating himself, he rendered assistance to Miss Clark; and through the self-possession of the gentlemen and the wonderful coolness of the ladies, the party managed to cling to the boat with considerable tenacity. The sheet was rolled over and over some twenty times by the angry waves, and with every violent surge of the waters hands had to be loosened from their hold and the chances taken on the changed position of the boat. The situation was a trying one, and as the boat drifted over the threatening rapids, the feelings of the party can be more easily imagined than described. The international bridge went the boat and its helpless party without being discovered, and it was not till they had reached a point directly in front of the water works that their perilous condition was noticed. The party were picked up very much exhausted, after having been struggling in the water for an hour and forty minutes.

SPECIAL NOTICES.

For Additional Special Notices see the Inside Pages.

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