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WEDNESDAY, OCTOBER 19, 1870.

LINE OF STEAMSHIPS TO LIVERPOOL.

The project of establishing a line of steamships between Philadelphia and Liverpool is again under consideration. The directors of the Pennsylvania Railroad are taking the leading, if not the only active, part in the discussion of practical plans for putting this enterprise on a substantial foundation; and it is reported that the main cause of delay at the present moment is the difficulty of deciding between a line to be established by an English firm, with guarantees from the railroad company, and a thoroughly American line, to be built by our own ship-builders, owned by our own capitalists, and to be controlled wholly by American influences.

It may be easier, for the time being, quicker, and cheaper to subsidize an English line; and if we are influenced by the example of Baltimore, or by the nationality of the steamships plying between New York and Europe, it would be natural enough to assist in establishing a foreign enterprise instead of manfully endeavoring to build up one of our own. We believe, however, that this course would be not only weak, but on the whole rather detrimental than beneficial to the commercial interests of Philadelphia. If the enterprise about which so much has been said is to be attempted at all, it should be undertaken in a vigorous and bold spirit, and it would be better to abandon it altogether than to swell the list of mortifying failures, or to solicit patronage for a new scheme that would not fully command public confidence. We had a line of steamships plying between this port and Liverpool established nearly twenty years ago, and for a time it was in successful and vigorous operation. The unfortunate loss of several vessels on the line first weakened public confidence in the regularity of its trips, but this difficulty would probably have soon been surmounted by the employment of new ships, if at the critical juncture in the history of this project all the remaining sea-worthy vessels of the line had not suddenly been withdrawn to be used as British transports in the Crimean war! Importers speedily resolved that if, in addition to the dangers of shipwreck, they were to be victimized by the exigencies of the English Government, it was folly to place their dependence upon a line thus doubly endangered. The German steamship lines are at this moment rendered unsafe by the present war; the French lines are not absolutely free from peril; and Great Britain may again be soon involved in a foreign war that would necessitate the withdrawal of any line of English steamships between this port and Liverpool. There is a degree of uncertainty, insecurity, and unreliability connected with all projects based on the employment of British ships which is fatal to their success.

If we are to have a Philadelphia line of steamships, let it be a genuine, not a fictitious, half-and-half affair. Let our mechanics build first-class vessels, of which every patriotic citizen will feel proud. Let Councils guard against the inconveniences heretofore arising from ice in the Delaware by building ice-boats that are ice-boats, and that do not prove inefficient at the first serious trial of their utility and strength.

The present time seems specially propitious for a revival of the project which has so long been vainly agitated. The recent change in the laws encouraging a distribution of imports among various cities, the growing disposition of Congress to grant subsidies to steamships built in this country, and the immense amount of business which the Pennsylvania Railroad could bestow upon a line of steamships sailing from this port to Liverpool, are all encouraging indications of the success of a creditable Philadelphia project. But it must be thoroughly Philadelphia in all its ramifications, if it is to gain that cordial support of merchants and citizens which is essential to marked success.

NAVAL OFFICERS AND DIPLOMATISTS.

SECRETARY ROBESON, in promptly suspending Commander Truxton, of the sloop-of-war Jamestown, from his command in consequence of his very extraordinary conduct in landing a file of marines at Honolulu for the purpose of forcibly lowering to half-mast the flag upon the United States Consulate, has performed an action that ought to meet with the cordial approval of the people of this country. The United States Consul, it appears, did not lower his flag as a mark of respect to the memory of the late Queen Dowager, because he had no official information of her death, and because he had been once before deceived by false intelligence in the matter. The redoubtable commander of the Jamestown undertook to vindicate the dignity of the country, and actually invaded a friendly territory with an armed force to compel a diplomatic officer of the United States to do what he (Truxton) assumed to be the proper thing in the way of etiquette. This was a double outrage, for Commander Truxton had no authority whatever over the Consul, and it was simply an insult to the authorities of Honolulu to parade a file of marines in their streets for any purpose without special permission.

The difficulty that occurred a few years ago between our Minister to Paraguay, Hon. Charles A. Washburn, and Rear-Admirals

Lee and Davis, proved very conclusively that the relations between our naval officers and our Diplomatic Corps sadly needed reconstruction, and that it was time the commanders of United States fleets and vessels upon foreign stations were informed of the fact that they were not the only upholders of the national honor and dignity among the nations of the earth. Although it may not be pleasant for naval officers to be subordinate to a "pot-house politician"—we believe that this was one of the elegant epithets bestowed upon Minister Washburn by Rear-Admiral Davis—in a foreign port, yet the exigencies of the situation are such that they must be so; and as the Davis-Washburn affair appears not to have had its proper effect in teaching some of the gentlemen of the quarter-deck that they can best serve their country by strictly minding their own business, it would be well that such an example should be made of Commander Truxton as will be remembered for all future time. The performances of Rear-Admirals Lee and Davis in the Paraguay muddle should never have been passed over as they were, and if the offense of the commander of the Jamestown is in any way extenuated, our ministers and consuls will have no security whatever from constant and insulting interference on the part of naval officers, whenever the latter may take it into their heads that the diplomatic representatives of the country are not performing their functions in a proper manner.

CONSTITUTIONAL REFORM.

The action of the Union League last night in giving a strong endorsement to the movement for a Constitutional Convention cannot fail to secure increased attention to this important subject, and we hope it may lead to the passage of a law designed to carry out the object in view at the next session of the Legislature. The necessity of a radical reform of many abuses is plainly evident to all good citizens, and there is no better way to devise appropriate remedies for the growing evils of the day than to call together the leading men of the State, without distinction of party, to revise the Constitution. Experience has demonstrated that the people are powerless to prevent the prostitution of the Government to bad purposes under the present system, and a Constitutional Convention, enlightened by the events of the last thirty years, could greatly improve the existing fundamental law of the Commonwealth.

The Post is having a hard time of it in defending the President for his mischievous action with regard to Secretary Cox and the pardoned Fenians, and in endeavoring to represent Simon Cameron as a model patriot and a statesman without guile. The two performances of the President which we have censured will admit of no extenuation, and they are indications of a demoralization in the administration that cannot but alienate the regards of the honest men of the country. That Simon Cameron was the chief agent in the expulsion of Mr. Cox from the Cabinet is evident from all the statements that have been made of the affair by the Washington correspondents of the various newspapers, and that Mr. Cox was expelled because he refused to allow the Congressional Republican Committee, of which Simon Cameron is the leading spirit, to dictate with regard to the management of his department, needs no proof for those who have watched the course of events. The Post must be very hard put to for an argument when it asks, "What is the meaning of this attack? Are THE TELEGRAPH and the Inquirer ready to go over to the Democracy?" The Post is perfectly well aware that we have no intention of going over to the Democracy, but that THE TELEGRAPH professes to be now, as it always has been, an independent journal, that does not fear to bestow its censures where they are deserved, without regard to mere partisan considerations. We believe that we are doing a better service to the public and to the Republican party by rebuking dishonesty, corruption, and intrigue in high places, than we are by apologizing for them, or by consenting to them by our silence. The action of the President in the two matters to which we have referred is absolutely inexcusable; and in saying so, we only utter what a multitude of fair-minded men think. With regard to Simon Cameron, the less THE Post says about him the better. Whitewash will not stick to the old Wigwagger, and our contemporary will do better by him if it lets him severely alone than if it attempts the impossible task of trying to make him presentable in decent society.

SPECIAL NOTICES.

HEAR PROFESSOR O. S. FOWLER, AT ASSEMBLY BUILDINGS, ON FRIDAY EVENING at 7:30, on "Love, Courtship, and Married Life." Seats, 25 cents. And consult him as to your Parentology, best business, etc., at the Continental Hotel, every day and evening during October. 10 19 25

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