THE DAILY EVENING TELEGRAPH-PHILADELPHIA, THURSDAY, DECEMBER 8, 1870.

SPIRIT OF THE PRESS.

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

POLITICAL DISABIL! TIES. From the N. Y. Times.

When a man gets up and talks as Governor Vance of North Carolina has been doing, about his having been all through the war a Union man, and nothing but a Union man, we doubt very much the expediency of ex-posing the falsehood of his assertion. There has been a great deal said, and much of it justly said, about the necessity of repentance on the part of the Rebels, before we can again safely admit them to full participation in the government of the country; but then it will not do to be too particular about their mode of showing their repentance. It is useless to expect them to go down on their marrow-bones, and acknowledge that they sinned, and were deceived when they tried to overturn the Union. The essential thing is that they should in their hearts be sorry for having rebelled, and be sincerely determined never to do the like again; but it matters very little in what way they reveal this state of mind. Governor Vance made, during the war, some very ferocious, and indeed we may add atrocious, speeches to the Rebel troops, and did what in him lay to instigate the persecution of Union men and recalcitrant Confederate conscripts in North Carolina.

We suppose there is nothing easier than to prove all this before the Senate; but then he can hardly give a stronger proof of his having repented of it, and of being hereafter resolved to lead a sober and loyal life, than his coming boldly out in the presence of his neighbors, and in the character of a Union man, and talking as if no disloyal words ever passed his lips. This is not certainly a fermal expression of repentance, but it is a sign of repentance which there is no mistaking; indeed, it involves, to a man of any self-respect, an amount of humiliation which almost entitles it to the name of penance. What good pur-pose can be served by asking for anything further, provided the principle be once con-ceded, as it has been conceded, that Rebels may purge themselves of their guilt in some manner or other, so as to qualify them for a seat in Congress?

Considering what has happened in Missouri, we trust the question of a general amnesty will receive an early discussion from Congress. The result of the election there has shown one thing clearly-that there is, or is likely to be, enough division of sentiment among Republicans in all the Southern States on this subject to make the continuance of the existing disabilities, imposed on persons guilty of having taken part in the Rebellion, a probable, if not actual, source of dissension and weakness in the party; and this division is likely to grow wider and deeper as time wears on and the passions excited by the war subside. Moreover, there is a very general and very well-founded feeling at the South, that these disabilities are injurious to the business interests of the Southern community. Apart from its influence on State politics, it is not possible to divide a community into two classes. one of them under a cloud, and governed by the other, without creating or protracting bitterness of feeling; and from bitterness of feeling business always suffers. even if it does not show itself in open violence. It is, however, of the utmost importance, both to blacks and whites, that business should prosper, and the tide of immigration be attracted south of Mason and Dixon's line, and it will not be so attracted so long as existing political questions, deeply affecting men's feelings as well as their interests, remain unsettled in that region. The character of the men who have risen to the surface in Southern politics ever since the war, and particularly of that portion of them which has been contributed by the war, has done the South serious damage, moral as well as material, and it will not be mended greatlythough we think the colored voters are rapidly beginning to understand the Whittemores-until the whole community of each State is admitted to the management of its affairs, and that this may be done without damage now, we have no doubt. In the last five years the negroes have learned to take care of themselves pretty well, both at the polls and otherwise, and in this field of activity they are certainly more likely to improve than to go back. Then, it must be remembered that the exrebels, be they bad or good, useful or mischievons, are not going to leave the country. They are here among us, an element, and a large, important, and influential element, in the population. It is one of the principles, and soundest principles of our Government, that all elements of the population, bad or good, ought to be represented, and that the safety of the State requires that each should have a recognized outlet for its feelings and opinions, whatever these may be. The whole Union is undoubtedly the better for having even such a constituency as New York city appear by members in Congress, and give vent to any badness there may be in it, and show by the very character of its representatives what the political tastes, standards, and opinions of its majority are. This rule applies no less to political heterothan to moral corruption, as long doxy as it involves no danger to the State. Vance's extraordinary declarations about his past record show that the Government has at least nothing to fear from him. It is quite certain that no good purpose would be served at this time of day by punishing him, and it only remains to consider, therefore, whether if he represents the views and feelings of any considerable portion of the people of North Carolina-and there can be no doubt that he does-it is in the interest of the rest of the country to keep him out. We imagine not; if he or his constituents have any treason left in them, or still entertain any sentiments hostile to the peace and dignity of the Government of this Union, the sooner and more correctly they are blarted out in some conspicuous places, the better; for all history shows that traitors are never so dangerous as when they are gagged.

sends annually to Congress prevents his probing to the quick the temper and tendency of an unfriendly Government. Such political surgery prefaces war; whereas the United States are so strong, and will soon be so irre-sistible, that we shall have our due and realize our destinies without war by sheer political weight.

A journal is not under the same duty of reserve and reticence as the President, and we hold it to be our business to signalize in this action of the authorities of the Dominion the conception, so hostile to the United States, which actuated the statesmen of England in bringing about the new North American confederation. When our civil war broke out European statesmen, short-sighted, jealous, and ill-informed, conceived that the moment was come to arrest forever the de-velopment of the United States into a single great power, ruling the whole North American continent. There may have been no exact concert to that end; but the measures taken were skilful and might have prevailed if they had not been in utter contradiction to the inevitable majestic march of events, and an attempt - Machiavellian in its want of principle-to make the whole future history of North America the same scenes of inevitable division and hostility which have always prevailed in Europe. The design had two creat features. One was the creation of the Mexican empire under Maximilian; the other was the establishment of the new federation of all the British-American provinces north of our own boundary line.

The confederation was founded expressly as a check upon the United States, and much exultation was expressed at the time by British statesmen and journalists at the discovery of so exquisite a device for placing on the flank of the republic a power which, together with the independent Southern confederation, would forever insure the disruption of North America. This foolish and unrighteous idea still prevails in the British mind. Even so late as last year Mr. Goldwin Smith, a resident among us, and a sympa-thizer, according to his feeble professional capacity, with our institutions and ourselves, wrote a letter to an English journal in which he expounded with approval this precious piece of philosophical statesmanship. It is not necessary to quote the letter, but its drift was that the hardy northernmost Americans, with their simpler lives and more monarchical tendency, would qualify and balance the more effervescent and progressive republican Union; with more rubbish of that sort; all showing that the question of inevitable supremacy on this continant was as sealed a book, at that late date even, to Mr. Goldwin Smith as to the driest English Tory at home, whom he so heartily despises.

Founded on ideas like these, and stimulated to assert themselves ridiculously in such a direction as this, even by the teachings of a Goldwin Smith, we cannot wonder at the unfriendly conduct of the authorities of the New Dominion. We have it on the authority of the President that they are harassing American fishing vessels with a severity not practised heretofore, and subjecting our ships to exceptional legislation which must not be allowed to stand for a moment. They are advancing pretensions and making laws to enforce them which the British Government itself has not hitherto ventured upon-pretensions which are little short of impudent. A statute of the Dominion prohibits the fishing vessels of the United States from having on board any merchandise whatever except what is necessary for such fishery, and subjects them to seizure and condemnation if they have, enforcing this by police visitation and intolerable inquisitorial proceedings. Such policy must be resisted at once. It is simply intolerable. It combines insult and injury, and seems more calculated to bring about trouble than to satisfy any legitimate interests. But even more flagrant is the attempt of the New Dominion to exclude American citizens from the navigation of the St. Lawrence. The President shows clearly that this is counter to the whole tendency of international action for seventy years all over the world in respect of rivers whose course runs throughout separate sovereignties. It is difficult to understand the drift of such legislation and policy, unless it aims at providing British statesmen with a spurious equivalent in the settlement of the Alabama claims. "As satisfaction for those," they may say, "we will open the St. Lawrence." We can hardly suppose them capable of such pettifogging; but why, then, do they permit the New Dominion, which the President rightly describes as irresponsible, to play such pranks as this? The legislation of the Dominion is subject to imperial veto, and its policy is controllable by a Governor-General, appointed by the crown. It is their business to keep this over-lively young power in order; for they must be perfectly aware themselves, and they ought to teach their subjects and proteges in the Dominion, that the theory of checking and balancing and qualifying and harassing the United States by a new North American Dominion is blown to pieces forever. This attempt to close the St. Lawrence to American vessels is a plain recurrence to ancient barbarism in the matter of river navigation. The principle was solemnly adopted at the Vienna Congress in 1815 that river navigation should be free. And no more offensive and unrighteous application of the opposite principle can be imagined than that which pretends to bar the great American West and Northwest from access to the sea through the basin of the St. Lawrence. The idea and the attempt to do so are so laughable and contemptible that they expose the Dominion and England to the derision of all civilized mankind. England cannot afford to irritate civilized sentiment in this way. Upon this subjec', at least, we ought to be peremptory. The Union ought to brook no action which deprives its citizens of the free navigation of the St. Lawrence basin. The interests and the dignity alike of the United States require that this should be set right without delay, and we are satisfied that American opinion will back the President in requiring of Great Britain that these questions with the Dominion should be settled forthwith in conformity with justice and American claims; for the policy of the Dominion, an American community, ought no longer to be under the inspiration of dynastic European, balance-of-power ideas, which the undoubted supremacy of this republic makes as much out of date on this continent as the cat-worship of the Egyptians.

opinions which his friends had of his real faith by recanting his recentation and holding firmly in the flames the hand which had little about it as any other white man on the It has devolved upon the Sun to enlighten effended by writing it. The frightful picture which Cranmer's death has painted on the open page of history teaches us a lesson of human nature and leads us to expect a repetition of the scene, either in the tragic or comic vein, whenever similar circumstances again occur, and, so far as the comedy has been played out, we have in the Porter and Grant farce an exact parallel to the Cranmer

tragedy. When Porter was a Rear-Admiral and Grant a General, Porter wrote a letter expressing his honest and contemptuous opinions of Grant. In the course of time Grant has become President, with power to confer upon Porter the much-coveted office of Ad-miral, and had already taken the first step towards it-only awaiting the assemblage of the Senate to nominate him for confirmation. At this critical juncture Porter's letter of six years ago came out, and Grant's vengeance was aroused. The fires were lighted for Porter, and he is to be brought to the stake by the refusal of Grant to nominate him as Admiral. Like Cranmer of old, Porter has balanced the relative miseries of a public recantation against the agony of a public withdrawal of his name as Admiral, and, as in the case of the archbishop, the love of the good things of this life has conquered the fear of the contempt of the world, and he has recanted-recented with a depth of self-abasement far lower than his wretched prototype ever reached. It is difficult to comprehend the spirit which could indite such words as these: 'I do not write for the purpose of exonerating myself, for I would rather be the writer of the letter than its publisher." It is almost impossible to suppose that such a man could find consolation in the reflection that there was at least some meaner man than himself; and when we examine the relative claims to meanness, it is by no means certain that Porter is entitled to draw consolation from the comparison. True it is that some one has betrayed an implied confidence in publishing a letter which he might have supposed its writer did not intend for public circulation; but what bas Porter done? He assures the President in his present letter that the former one contained "sentiments I know I never felt, and which are so at variance with those that I have uniformly expressed towards you." He recollects well enough that he never entertained the sentiments expressed in his letter, while he admits that he wrote it. If this be true, the offense he committed was a gross libel upon a man of whom he honestly entertained favorable opinions; and in our judgment this is a graver wrong both to society and to persons than the publication of an official letter in which no injunction of secrecy was contained. If the situation of the parties were reversed and the Admiral had published such a letter written by another, we think that he would have reversed his comparative estimate of the meanness of the respective actors, and assure the President that the author of a dishonest libel was infinitely more despicable than the publisher of it to the world. But we do not wish to insist too strongly on our view, feeling that between two such acts there is room for an honest difference of opinion, and that either of the actors might conscientiously derive some satisfaction from supposing the other to be the

meaner. Leaving Porter and his rival to settle their respective claims to turpitude, we turn to the President. If we are to believe the Vice-Admiral, Grant has assured him that the publication of the Fort Fisher letter has "made him lose his faith in human nature." There is a refreshing simplicity about this which forcibly recalls Sancho Panza when he had accidentally become a governor. Surrounded as he is by sycophants, who are not ashamed to lick the dust at his feet for the favors he has to confer, Grant supposes that his own virtues and meri's deserve and command the adulation, and does not for a moment suspect the motive to be "that thrift may follow fawning." Ignorant alike of politics, of history, and of human nature, Grant forgets the dreary years of his life when, having descended from the high estate of a graduate from West Point, he had sunk so low in his own and in public estimation as to find no better employment than peddling cord-wood for corn whisky in St. Louis, or serving as clerk in a tan-yard in Illinois for seven hundred dollars a year, where, amid the delicious odor of such a place, Porter would never have ventured to seek or fawn upon him, and where no flatterers could be found more courtly than the boors who brought in the savory skins or the loads of tan-bark for sale; and when he accidentally discovers that some one among his followers once had a poor opinion of him and set it down on paper, he is struck with astonishment and forthwith "loses his faith in human nature." He had better have kept it to lose when the Admiral disavowed his clever portrait painting. Thus far the parsllel between Cranmer and Porter's case has run only to the point where the prelate had recanted, and was watching the effect of his deed upon "Bloody Mary. Cranmer had prepared for either event, and had in his bosom a recantation of his recantation, ready for use in case the vengeance of the offended powers were insatiable. Porter is now waiting to see whether Grant will be satisfied with his present humiliation, or whether his vengeance will only be gorged by frustrating his victim's fondest hopes. the President should imitate "Bloody Mary" in this particular, we shall hope no less of the gallant tar than that he will produce from his bosom a recantation of his recanta tion, and with his dying hopes declare that Grant is an imbecile and that he always knew it.

the administration at Washington on several points respecting which lamentable obscurity and confusion have prevailed; and as an act of charity and benevolence we will furnish a succinct statement of the circumstances under which President Monroe, half a century since, made this somewhat famous declaration, and the object aimed to be accomplished.

Mr. Monroe, the last of the Presidents contributed to the country from the large stock of heroes left as a legacy by the Revolution, was an amiable old gentleman, of excellent intentions, prudent and cautious to a degree that verged upon timidity, and subject to the influence of the three great men of his Cabinet, Adams, Crawford, and Calhoun. They were wise and far-seeing statesmen, full of activity and enterprise, and fond of strong and decided measures-bold and determined-just the men to supplement the deficiencies of the facile-minded and easygoing President. The doctrine amounted to this: that the United States would not look with complacency upon any attempt by European governments to plant colonies on this continent; and the implication was that if Spain should undertake to repossess herself of the countries of South America which she had lost by successful revolution, the acquiescence of the United States could not be calculated upon. At that time the Holy Alliance was in full vigor, the bulk of continental Europe being included in it. Revolutionary France, under Bonaparte, had frightened the sovereigns half out of their senses, and they were pledged to each other to put down, by force if necessary, any republican manifestations. Great Britain was not a party to this understanding, and was therefore regarded with distrust and apprehension by the other great powers. In this exigency Mr. Canning, then Prime Minister of England, sought to fortify his Government by an understanding with the United States. Mr. Rush, who represented our Government in London, was sounded by the astute Englishman, but he had no authority to respond to the overture. The growing power of Russia caused great alarm in England, and the encroachments of the Emperor Alexander in the northwest of America were specially apprehended. Mr. Leavitt Harris, then American Charge d'Affaires at St. Petersburg, was approached by the British Minister under the direction of Canning; and after some correspondence with the Washington Government, President Monroe was induced to insert in his annual message the ambiguous and empty menace known as the "Monroe doctrine." It was a harmless little swagger, indicating nothing, and followed by no action of any kind. But it accomplished all that was hoped for by the statesman on whose suggestion it was pronounced. The sovereigns of the continent opened their eyes with considerable interest, supposing that John Bull and Uncle Sam had entered into an arrangement that might in certain contingencies lead to decided measures. The modern interpretation of the doctrine would have terrified Mr. Monroe beyond des-

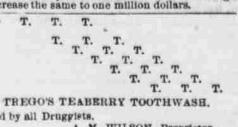
cription. According to the present understanding of it, we were committed to a course of invasion and conquest that could only have terminated when we had taken possession of North America, and guaranteed the independence of the rest of the continent. But there was no harm done, barring the declamatory nonsense which Fourth of July orators and

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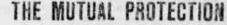
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THE BEHAVIOR OF THE NEW DO. MINION.

From the N. Y. Herald.

The President's message affords a favorable opportunity for considering the whole policy of the British Government towards the United States at the critical hour when the destinies of the republic were under trial in the civil war. That policy it is which is now bearing its legitimate and bitter fruit in the disgraceful conduct of the Dominion towards American vessels and the attempts to close the St. Lawrence to the navigation of American citizens. The President preserves, as is right, in his official utterance the calm dignity and

PORTER AND GRANT. From the N. Y. World.

When Archbishop Cranmer, with the fear of a fiery death in his heart, recanted his solemply expressed opinions, the world doubted the sincerity of his recantation; and, in considering how much more distressing it was to be roasted alive than to crawl at the feet of power and lick the dust of humiliation, people from that day to this have generally admitted that in his place they would have done likewise. When, however, the remorseless persecutors brought him to the stake, notwithreserve appropriate to his position. The securiors brought him to the stake, notwith-diplomatic character of the document he standing his recontation, he justified the Fresident Grant. who probably knows as

THE MONROE DOCTRINE. From the N. Y. Sun.

Is it not about time for demagegues, in Congress and out, to have done with ignorant and senseless gabble concerning the Monroe doctrine? Some superficial writers for the newspapers have indulged in foolish and inconsequent utterances on this subject, without contradiction or correction, until the public mind has become utterly bewildered in regard to the origin and scope of that notable declaration.

Mr. Monroe never intended that it should have any practical effect. He enunciated the doctrine in his annual message to Congress under an inspiration that he scarcely understood, and knew not how to resist. He recommended no legislative action, and Congress took no cognizance of the subject. The whole matter has long since passed into the domain of history, and it is perhaps not surprising that the generation which has come upon the stage since the events that called the declaration forth have been forgotten should accept as gospel the statements and deductions of journals of no more authority then the New York Times. And now oven the St. Domingo job is brought forward under cover of this so-called "doctrine" by

other petty spouters have since inflicted upon a long suffering people. DIPLOMATIC SECRETS.

From the N. Y. Tribune. For the credit of the French nation, we

wish these scandalous revelations of the secrets of the empire might be brought to a close. Ever since the palace of the Tuileries has been to let, we have been entertained with endless stories of the disreputable character of the late tenant, till we are lost in wonder that the ownsrs of the building should have allowed him to stay in it so long. It has been shown by documents rifled from the secret cabinet that Napoleon was both a roue and an imbecile, vulgar even in his vices, and weak in his wickedness. He was afraid of his own people. He did not possess their confidence, and he well knew it. The highest aim of his policy was to cheat them, and he never quite succeeded in doing so. Intrigue was his passion, but he never attempted an intrigue that somebody did not outwit him. The latest revelation of his incapacity comes, it is supposed, from M. Thiers. A pamphlet entitled M. Thiers et sa Mission en 1870 has just been published at Tours under the name of Sidney Renouf, but the real author was evidently some one much better acquainted than that clever journalist could have been with the secrets of the French Foreign Office. From this pamphlet we learn how complete for years had been Bismarck's success in "working Napoleon;" how the wily German statesman managed to shape the policy of France in the interest of France's foremost rival; how the Prussian Ambassador at Paris was allowed constantly to overrule the Emperor's own ministers; how Napoleon was induced to give his assent to the war of 1866, and was outmanceavred in the treaty of peace which was ostensibly concluded by his intervention. Sadowa was a blow from which Napoleon never recovered. "From that moment," says the pamphleteer, "there was no unity in any of his plaus. His policy became fitful and incoherent. One day the boldest schemes were broached. Another day cowardly fears prevailed." He attempted to secure a cession of territory from Prussia. and the attempt ended in his own humiliation and the conclusion of the compact between Prussia and the States of South Germany. Having thus strengthened his rival, he went to war, neither in self-defense, nor in deference to popular elamor, nor on a point of honor; but to revenge the incivility with which the King had spoken of him personally in an interview with M. Benedetti. If Napoleon was such an utterly weak and contemptible creature as these post-mortem

revelations depict him, the world will be curious to know why France submitted to him for eighteen years. He notoriously had no military genius, and though it used to be the custom to credit him with wonderful political segacity, it has been evident for some years that he had none of that either. Unless we accept as of general application the truth which has been so often illustrated during the war, that Frenchmen would rather be humbugged than not, it is impossible to understand how a great nation should allow itself to be degraded by follies which it needed so little judgment to detect. For the honor of that great majority which ratified by the plebiscitum the misdeeds of the past and assumed the responsibility for the crimes of 1870, patriotic Frenchmen might well beg that no more of these shameful revelations should be given to the world.

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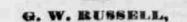
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