

SPHIRT OF THE PRESS.

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

A BAREFACED JOB.

From the N. Y. World. The following paragraph appears in the report of the proceedings of the Senate last Monday:— REVIVING AMERICAN COMMERCE. Mr. COOKING (Rep., N. Y.) introduced a bill to aid in the construction of twenty or more first-class iron steamships, together with ship yards, machine shops, rolling mills, waives, docks, etc., and to secure to the Government the use of the same for postal, naval, and other purposes. It was referred to the Committee on Commerce.

The bill proposes to incorporate W. H. Webb, Clarence H. Clark, John A. Griswold, John Roach, Paul N. Spafford, Henry Green, and others, under the name of the American Mail and Ocean Transportation Company, for the purpose above indicated; and provides that the Government of the United States shall pay the interest on the first mortgage bonds of the company to the amount of \$20,000,000 in gold for thirty years, not becoming responsible, however, for the payment of the principal. In return the company's steamships are to carry the United States mails and Government agents free of charge.

Decidedly it is a misnomer to call this a bill "to revive American commerce." It ought to be called a bill to revive the business of Messrs. Webb, Clark, Griswold, and their associates. There is little prospect that so barefaced a scheme of underservicing charity will succeed; but it is nevertheless a matter deeply to be regretted that a Senate of the State which at the last election so boldly protested against class legislation should be the willing mouthpiece of the managers of this job.

Does any man suppose that such a bill, should it become a law, would benefit in the slightest degree those ship-owners who are anxious to buy vessels wherever they can be bought most cheaply? Or that it would aid the ship-builders of our own country who are not in the Webb-Cooking ring? This whole ship-building and ship-buying question is an exceedingly simple one. It has been asserted by Mr. Roach himself, and ably set forth in a pamphlet issued by the proprietors of the Atlantic Works at Boston, that if plate-iron, pig-iron, rigging, etc.—in short, all the materials which go to the building of our iron vessels—were free of duty, our ship-builders could compete with their foreign rivals, notwithstanding the higher rate of wages in this country.

As it is, these materials are so costly, because of the enormous duties laid upon them, that American competition with foreign builders is impossible, and will continue to be so while the present tariff is in force. When we remember that there is also a law against buying and registering a foreign-built ship, we perceive that radical legislation has placed our merchants in the pleasant position of being unable to build or buy vessels.

Could there be any remedy for this state of things more simple than the abolition of the duty on ship-building materials and the repeal of the law forbidding the registry of foreign-built vessels? If this were done, our merchants would buy their ships of American builders, provided the latter should prove able to hold their own against foreign competition. If not, foreign ships would be bought and placed under the American flag, and American commerce would flourish, even if American ship-building proved unprofitable.

The Cooking scheme, on the other hand, proposes simply to take a million dollars annually from the people and give it to Messrs. Webb, Griswold, and their associates, to enable them to build twenty ships for their own personal benefit, while all other ship-owners are left precisely where they now are. Why this bill for the benefit of these half dozen favored men should be falsely styled a bill to aid American commerce is a question which the merchants of New York who are now associated in business with the beneficiaries named would like to have Mr. Cooking answer.

NO MORE DETECTIVES IN THE INTERNAL REVENUE DEPARTMENT. From the N. Y. Sun. It is reported from Washington that General Pleasanton, the new Commissioner of Internal Revenue, appeared before the Committee of Ways and Means on Wednesday, and recommended "an increase in the number of supervisors and inspectors." That is to say, he wants more detective officers and spies attached to his establishment.

In 1869 General Pleasanton succeeded Joshua F. Bailey as Collector of the Fourth district in this city. When he took this office his predecessor, Bailey, was a defaulter there to the amount of about eighty thousand dollars. General Pleasanton remained for a whole year in charge of the Fourth district, and in all that time he never discovered that there was any defalcation there, or that there was anything out of the way in Bailey's accounts.

In consideration of this proof of official genius and energy, he was transferred to the scene of Bailey's greater exploits, the Thirty-second district, with double the salary of any former collector, and less work; and now, as a further and more brilliant testimonial to his capacity, and in accordance with the principles of the present administration, he has been put at the head of the department. No wonder he thinks there should be more inspectors and supervisors. He had had a few more of them to help him in the Fourth district, he might possibly have found out about Bailey and his robberies a little before the year was out, so that he need not have waited for Bailey's flight to reveal the villainy to his knowledge.

Another reason why the new Commissioner wishes for more detectives is that he will have the appointment of them. A thousand vacant places to fill would be a fine thing for the military ring. It is true that there is no need of them; and that if more men were necessary in the internal revenue service, the present assistant assessors could be used for the purpose, since they have very little to do, and are already paid by the Government. But these officers are not dependent on the Commissioner; and if General Pleasanton could get their number reduced, and a lot of inspectors substituted for them, his power would experience an agreeable augmentation.

On the whole, we presume that Congress will not be in a hurry to comply with the Commissioner's application for an increased number of detectives. "GODLINS' YOUR FRIEND—NOT SHORT." From the N. Y. Times. The released Fenian prisoners who Thursday night reached our city are in imminent danger of being torn to pieces. Two powerful parties are fighting to obtain possession of their bodies, and the battle is waged so furiously that nobody can tell whether "the refugees" will come out of it dead or alive.

In the first place, Tammany claimed them as its own, and for a time none seemed inclined to dispute its pretensions. The recognized leaders of the Fenian organization identified themselves with Tammany, and applauded the munificence which awarded thousands stolen from the tax-payers to give *celo* to the coming demonstration. The fitness of the thing admitted of no dispute. It was eminently proper that a party in combination, deriving its main strength from the Irish vote, should ponder to that vote by furnishing money for a demonstration of this kind. Had Mr. Tweed offered his Fifth Avenue mansion for their accommodation, or Mr. Hall his green coat for Burke, and horses for the rest, there would have been no occasion for surprise.

But Republican managers discovered that a magnificent opportunity was before them. The Irish vote loomed up as something which, by a stroke of strategy, they might grasp. They thought they had but to secure the Cuba's passengers to obtain a mastery over the entire population of the city. Never before had such a chance occurred. Tammany's power might be challenged in its own household. The gods whom Tweed has worshipped and by whose favor he reigns, might be induced to smile upon Murphy. And then all would be serene. The Irish vote would be come part of the Custom House goods and chattels, and at the next election New York would roll up eighty thousand majority. There was genius in the conception. Luckily, too, the means were at hand for carrying it into execution. The immediate result is the fierce conflict now in progress for the smiles of the fortunate exiles. We hope they will survive the ordeal. It would be shocking if a group of poor fellows, who have just escaped from foreign dungeons, should be killed with kindness in this Irish city of New York.

In the nature of things, Tammany might be expected to crawl in the gutters for the furtherance of its ends. If our glorious Corporation, rich in spoils, had chartered a tug-boat, filled its hold with champagne and boned turkeys at the tax-payers' expense, and accompanied the Tammany boat as vouchers for its respectability, there would have been no wonder expressed. But when a revenue cutter, with a United States flag, and United States officers, was pressed into the service in behalf of the ingenious scheme for capturing the Irish vote and making it Republican, men rubbed their eyes to make sure that there was no mistake. There was no mistake about it. A vessel representing Federal authority undertook to run a race with Tammany's boat. United States officials condescended to play second fiddle to Tweed, and to drag the national flag through dirty water in a hopeless contest with the Tammany crew. Imagine the blarney, the paltry trickery, the unmanly stooping to counter, which marked the whole affair. Imagine the button-boiling, the winking and whispering, the vile flattery and the vile falsehood, which are going on on both sides. And then let any candid man say whether the display is or is not one of which Americans have cause to be proud.

What is the occasion of all this noise? Who are these liberated prisoners, that party leaders must go crazy in the effort to secure them? In what do they differ from the hundreds of emigrants who land at Castle Garden every week? The Kosuth reception, as seen now, was extravagant enough, but, at least, Kosuth had some claims to public consideration. There was some reason in the excuse extended to men like Meagher and Mitchell, for they were representative men, educated, able, and personally influential. Even the reception of Stephens was not unintelligible, for Fenianism was the creation of his mind. But with one or two exceptions, the men whom Mr. Gladstone has now sent over are neither better nor worse than thousands who were here before them. We have exiled patriots from Poland, Hungary, Germany, and elsewhere, but who ever heard of Tweed and custom-house employes running a race to catch them? They came unnoticed, uninvited, and earn their bread quietly. Does the mere fact that O'Donovan Rossa and his companions have been convicted in British prisons make them heroes and martyrs? If they deserve to be canonized for having been the victims of British law in the Fenian cause, what recompense is in store for the heroic O'Neill, or the Fenians captured in Canada?

Of course Mr. Gladstone will now realize the folly of his temporizing policy. It was right that the Fenian prisoners should be released, but their release, to convey a moral, should have been unconditional. By compelling them to come to the United States as a condition of liberty, Mr. Gladstone rendered the act inoperative in Ireland, while he converted the ex-convicts into martyrs and exiles. His blundering in this case is akin to his whole Irish policy. That has been a succession of blunders, the general effect of which is seen in the present condition of Ireland, the unabated disaffection of its people, and the cowardly fear which impelled him to drive across the sea a handful of ordinary Irishmen, utterly destitute of influence in their native land.

HISTORY FOR SOUTHERN CHILDREN. From the N. Y. Tribune. Two Southern teachers, one the principal of a high school at Alexandria, Va., the other occupying a similar position in Louisville, have prepared a volume of 500 pages which they pronounce to be "the first school history of the United States ever published by Southerners." From a third and revised edition of this work, printed by a firm in Baltimore, we purpose selecting a few specimens, to show how the men upon whom the serious duty of educating Southern youth has devolved are doing their part to prevent the healing of the wounds of war, and keep the two sections of the country hostile for all time to come. The authors set forth in their preface that "in all the school histories hitherto published events have been presented from a Northern standpoint, and consequently the South has been sometimes neglected and more frequently misrepresented." To correct this long-standing grievance, about 100 pages are devoted to the "sectional war" of 1861-'65, and an attempt is made "to show upon whom its blood-guiltiness rests."

After describing the wickedness of the Abolitionists, the atrocities of which they were guilty in Kansas, the attempt of "John Brown, a Northern fanatic, born in New York, and a noted Kansas assassin," to bring on a servile war, the authors proceed to the election of "a sectional candidate" for the Presidency in 1860. The Southern people, "who had for years been prevented from enjoying their constitutional rights in the North," justly regarded this as "the commencement of hostilities." It was "alleged that the property, lives, and liberty of the citizens were threatened by the aggressive aspect of the incoming administration."

"South Carolina was the first to act," and the Confederates, "having tried peaceful measures to this purpose," attacked and captured Fort Sumter. This forcible appro-

priation of Federal property "gave the North for the first time a correct idea of the real condition of things." Mr. Lincoln reached Washington in a Scotch cap and cloak, "and was invested in office while surrounded by an armed guard." There seems to have been no real desire at the North, according to this work, to preserve the Union; but "the moderates and peace-makers were everywhere beaten and put down." "If any were rash enough to attempt to stem the tide of madness, they were either knocked down and beaten or grossly insulted." Virginia left the Union because "the President had forced a sword into her hands." Among the Northern people "the noblest and manliest passions of the human heart were appealed to. Influential journals declared that the Southmen were degenerate, that the men were cowardly and bullies, and the women beautiful and loaded with jewels. 'Boody and Beauty' was one of the watch-words of the hour." "Not a few handsome youths joined the army for the privilege of wearing the buttons." "Colonel Ellsworth, a famous 'rough' and circus-rider of Chicago, commanded a Zouave regiment that invaded Virginia."

Even if these monstrous statements were all true, it would be hard to discover a good reason for teaching them to children. The dearest wish of patriotic Americans now ought to be that the passions of those four years should be forgotten, and that the next generation at least should grow up united. The work in which the authors of this Southern School History are engaged is nothing less than to plant the seeds of perpetual dissension and a new war. It is a devilish work, and we hope all sensible Southerners will mark it with their indignant reprobation.

THE UNCLAIMED MONIES IN THE SAVINGS BANKS.

From the N. Y. Herald. Another effort is to be made in the Legislature to make the savings banks disgorge the heavy sums they hold under the title of unclaimed moneys—a sort of aggregation of what the sporting fraternity call "sleepers," which the banks have managed to appropriate in the course of their long and vigilant watching game. The ostensible object of the legislator who renews this measure is to put these moneys into the hands of the State. It would be far better to have them taken in trust only, for the benefit of such owners or heirs as may at some future time put in an appearance, or else expend them on public charities. It is not known exactly what use they are to be put to after the State gets them. These unclaimed moneys form no small sum for they have been gathering for ten and twenty years in the drawers of our savings banks. It is a sum well worthy of a legislator's gaze, and consequently the scent of a "job" will cling round the bill. It may be a striker—one of those measures that contemplate fair and wholesome reforms, but which cannot get further towards enactment than an investigation, in which the aggrieved individual shows up his books and greases committeemen's hands. It is most probably another flyer intended to bring down the savings banks and make them disgorge to their greedy legislators a portion of their dead and gone depositors' savings in order that they may keep the rest to themselves.

THE SCANDAL AMONG THE METHODISTS.

From the N. Y. Nation. An investigation with open doors into the alleged frauds in the Methodist Book Concern has at last been commenced and is now pending. When it is remembered that the first public mention of these frauds was made in September, 1869, and that ever since that time not only the reputation of the Methodist body but of religion has been suffering seriously from the stories about them, it must be admitted that the delay in examining them has been a most remarkable phenomenon. The main object of the case is Dr. Lanahan, the assistant agent or superintendent in charge of the Concern, declared, a year and a half ago, that he had discovered serious waste and even dishonesty in its management. As soon as he made this charge, there ought to have been an immediate and thorough investigation, and the persons touched by it ought, as honorable men and good Christians, to have clamored for the investigation and refused all pecuniary aid from him. So far from this, however, nearly everybody connected with the concern seems to have had his mind occupied not with the question whether there had really been fraud and mismanagement, but whether Dr. Lanahan could not be induced to stop the scandal caused by his mention of it and prevent the decline in the business of the Concern. On Dr. Lanahan's refusing to retract his charges, he was relegated to the charge of a committee, which, in fact, is he and not the persons whom he accused who is now on his trial. In fact, the "credit" about which many of the brethren seem to have been most concerned all along is not the credit of the Church as a spiritual institution, but the credit of the Church as a moneyed corporation, with bills to meet, bonds to put on the market, and goods to sell.

We are not going to enter into a history of the affair, or make more than a passing reference to the two or three sham or at least abortive investigations which have been attempted during the past year, and every one of which has resulted in confirming the impression that whether or not there had been fraud in the management of the Book Concern, there had been something wrong in it that called for examination, and that even if Dr. Lanahan was a libeller there was some foundation or color for his libels which needed clearing up. We shall express no opinion either as to the truth or falsehood of his statements. This is now at last under investigation, and what is more important than all public investigation, and though we hold the force of inquiry to be radically wrong and to reveal a most extraordinary misapprehension on the part of many leading men in the Methodist denomination as to the exact relations of the Church to the community at large, it will, nevertheless, in all probability bring out the truth, which is the main point. When an officer of an institution managing what may fairly be called trust funds, brings a charge of malfeasance against any of his associates, the proceeding which usage and common sense prescribe is to put the person whom he accuses instantly on his defense, and to call on the accuser for his proofs. This is the course pursued in courts of law and in all inquiries of a judicial nature conducted by laymen. The charge of libel or of perjury against the prosecutor follows the trial of the accused but never precedes it. If a man, having had his watch stolen, goes to swear a complaint against somebody whom on good grounds he suspects of stealing it, the magistrate does not at once make the prosecutor give bail to appear and stand his trial on a charge of slander and defamation, and declare that the truth will come out in that way as well as in any other. If he did, there would

be very few charges brought, and most thieves would escape. Or, to use a closer illustration—if the cashier of a bank was to inform the president that he had discovered that one of the tellers was a defaulter, and first act of the president would certainly be to secure the teller and investigate his accounts, and not to try the cashier for lying. If the president of a bank receives charges of fraud against one of his officers as some members of the Methodist body have received the charges of fraud in the Book Concern, and enquired into their truth only indirectly, through a libel suit against the accuser, people would certainly be very shy of keeping deposits at his bank or owning stock in it. The time to try a false witness is after his accusations have been examined and have broken down. To treat him from the outset as a culprit is to favor a crime by making the exposure of it troublesome and vexatious, if not dangerous. Slander and "scandal" are bad things, but they are not so bad as theft or embezzlement, and it is recognized in all systems of jurisprudence with which we possess any acquaintance that to make accusation *prima facie* an offense would enable all other classes of offenders to thrive on it. The machinery of the machinery for the protection of public morality, however much more true is of machinery for the protection of interests that are eternal.

We doubt, indeed, if we have ever met with a more striking illustration of the dangers which the Church runs whenever it becomes a great proprietor than is to be found in Judge Fancher's speech at the opening of Dr. Lanahan's trial. After mentioning the publication of Dr. Lanahan's charge in the newspapers in September, 1869, he proceeds to speak of their consequences. To anybody who only considers what the Methodist denomination and all other denominations profess to be and undertake to do, the consequences of most gravity seem obvious enough; indeed, the gravest consequences are so grave that all others beside them seem utterly insignificant and trivial. Of course, in the case of an institution which has for its object the spread of moral and religious truth, and which is ostensibly managed for the glory of God and not for worldly profits, the most lamentable accident, and indeed, it would seem the only result worth mentioning of a charge of pecuniary dishonesty against its conductors, is the shock to the religious convictions of that large body of persons in all churches and communities in whose eyes the claims of religion to confidence and respect are based on the character of its leading teachers and professors. That a youth who has been brought up on the mental and moral pabulum supplied by the Book Concern should be suddenly informed that the managers of the Concern, who get up and distribute all these improving publications, are a parcel of knaves who care more for their own pockets than for the salvation of souls, is certainly a serious matter, not so much because he will not buy or read the books of the Concern any more, as because it shakes his faith in everything he has held sacred—the greatest misfortune that can happen to a human being.

We were, therefore, a good deal surprised—we were going to say, entertained—at reading Judge Fancher's enumeration of the terrible things which happened after the publication of Dr. Lanahan's charge in the New York Times. As the first, and we suppose the worst, he sets down the heavy deprecation of certain bonds issued by the Book Concern to pay for the new building called the "Publishing House." Those persons who had bought some already declared they were swindled, and nobody else could be got to buy any at all. An effort, the Judge says, was made to do something to correct the effect of that atrocious article—that is, the effect not on faith and morals, but on the credit of the concern in Wall street. Dr. Lanahan refused, however, to sign a paper that was prepared for this purpose; so Judge Fancher declares with much solemnity, "that the man who would permit such an article to circulate without following it with an explanation was not fit to have charge of the vast interests of the Methodist Book Concern," as if the first and great object of the Book Concern and of all other "Concerns" on the globe was not to be honestly managed. After the appearance of the article, says the judge, not a bond could be issued, though \$80,000 worth had previously been "taken quite freely." In 1867, the profits of the Concern were \$88,602, in 1868, they were \$121,950; but when these charges were made, they fell in 1869 to \$68,719, and properly felt, we think; but the judge thinks it was horrible, and of other loss and damage he makes no mention. We wish they had fallen to nothing, until the charges were investigated fully and openly; it is a disgrace to the Methodist Church that the profits did not disappear altogether—that anybody bought its books, while its leading men were trying to shirk enquiry as to whether a solemn trust had or had not been grossly abused. Dr. Lanahan, according to Judge Fancher, has written to bishops and others of the clergy such words as these—"Fraud, fraud, fraud! Infamous and deep has been the history of this concern for many years. 'Is a man,' the judge enquires, 'that is capable of writing that sentence, capable to stand in the place of one of the principal agents of the Book Concern?' May it please the judge, if the frauds exist, the man who wrote that sentence is just the man to stand in that place. Moreover, there is no surer sign of rottenness in any sect, body, or organization than the appearance of greater horror over the making of an accusation than over the commission of the offense. As soon as we see 'scandal' become the greatest dread of a community, we may be sure that its morals are becoming muddled at their source. The elaborate arrangements made by Jesuit casuists for its prevention at any cost are among the disgraces of Catholic theology, and we should be sorry to see similar pains taken in any Protestant denomination for the polishing of the outside of the platter. 'Bonds' might rise, and 'profits' grow, and 'sales' swell, and yet every object for which the Christian Church exists be neglected. There is a point at which a man may become 'good' a business-man' for the successful promotion of the Christian religion, and every denomination which for any purpose takes to buying and selling has to see to it that the managers of its affairs do not reach it.

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