SPIRIT OF THE PRESS.

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

ENGLAND AND THE UNITED STATES. From the N. Y. H. rald.

We live in an age of the grandest events among the nations and of the strangest political coincidences On Thursday, for example, while the capnon in front of the City Hall, within a stone's throw of the Herald office, were thundering their warlike welcome to the great passing Fenian procession, we were receiving despatches from London and from Washington, the whole purport of which is a new entente cordiale be ween England and the United States. It struck us as a most extraordinary concurrence of events, that while hearing this warlike thunder of the Fenian cannon we should be reading these lightning despatches from the foggy Tnames and the frozen Potomac-from President Grant and Queen Victoria. "Let us have peace!" And while looking out upon this Fenian pageant, and recognizing in its political and military forces an argument the most powerful with England in behalf of peace with this country, it appeared to us that this imposing Irish parade was involuntarily celsbrating the inauguration of a new epoch of progress, peace, prosperity, and happiness to "the three kingdoms" and "the great repub-

lie" and to all their people.

The Queen's speech to the two houses of the British Parliament gives us, in a few brief sentences, the inauguration of this new historical era. She says that "at different times several questions of importance have arisen, which are not yet adjusted, and which materially affect the relations between the United States and the territories and people of British North America." She next submits that one of these questions (the fisheries) "calls particularly for an early settlement, lest the possible indiscretions of individuals should impair the neighborly understanding which is on all grounds so desirable to cherish and maintain." In plainer terms, she would say:-"You must look gentlemen, for a settlement of North American fishery troubles. General Ben Butler has been making some mischievous speeches to the Yankee fishermen at Cape Cod, and he seems to be backed up by General Grant. Those Yankee fishermen will be apt to take the hint, and they may get up a fight, and get the Feniaus on the Canadian border again before we are ready for them, if they are not at once attended to." Viewing the matter in this light, the Queen next says that she has, through a friendly correspondence with Gen. Grant, saggested the appointment of a joint commission, and has agreed to a proposal from the President to enlarge the powers of this joint commission, so that it shall embrace the Alabama claims "and all claims for compensation which have been or may be made by each Government or by its citizens upon the other."

This is all we have in the Queen's speech on the subject; but what she has omitted touching this joint commission is supplied us in the correspondence between her Minister at Washington, Sir Edward Thornton, and Mr. Fish, our Secretary of State. Minister Thornton says he is directed by Lord Granville to propose a "joint high commission," of members to be named by each Government; that it shall hold its sessions in Washington, and that its business shall be to consider and "discuss the mode of settling the different questions which have arisen out of the fisheries" and other matters (such as the St. Lawrence navigation question) affecting the relations of the United States with the New Dominion. Mr. Fish, in reply, writes he is instructed by the President to say that "be shared with her Majesty's Government the appreciation of the importance of a friendly and complete understanding between the two governments' on the subjects suggested, "and fully recognizes the friendly spirit which has prompted the proposal." But the President thinks the commission on the limitations proposed would fail to secure a perfect understanding of peace. He, therefore, proposes to turn over to this "joint High Commission" the Alabama claims, and if met upon this ground, the appointment of the commissioners for the United States will be made, and he thus hopes for "a just and amicable arrangement of all the questions which now unfortunately stand in the way of an entire and abiding friendship between the two nations.

This proposition being accepted, the President has nominated Secretary Fish, General Schenck, Justice Nelson, of the Supreme Court of the United States, Mr. Hoar, late Attorney-General, and Senator Williams, of Oregon, to this "joint high commission" on the part of the United States. From the other side we hear that Earl de Grey and Ripon has been appointed, and that Minister Thornton will be next in order; and we learn that Sir John Rose, Sir John A. Macdonald, Professor Montague Bernard, with Lord Tenterden as Secretary, have been also designated. The members on the part of our Government are perfectly satisfactory. Mr. Fish is pacific and conservative. General Schenck is progressive, and has semething of the bold Western theory of American rights; but he is an old diplomat and he is not unreasonable. Justice Nelson brings with him the coolness, carefulness, and legal precision of the Supreme Court. Mr. Hoar, of Massachusetts, may be relied upon in behalf of our fishermen's rights, and Senator Williams, of Oregon, is fully conversant with the rights, claims, and interests of our people on the borders of British Columbia and Puget's Sound.

The British commissioners, it is reported, sailed for New York yesterday. We are, therefore, disposed to consider all the existing differences between the two countries, upon the various questions to be settled, as virtually adjusted in the appointment of this "joint high commission." They seem to have in England a very erroneous impression of the belligerent proclivities of General Schenck, and in some apprehension from his appointment as our Minister to London, Lord Granville may have conceived the grand idea of this joint commission. We know that while General Schenck, in this city, has been awaiting his final instructions, his contemplated voyage to England has been superseded by this new and comprehensive arrangement.

England is evidently resolved upon peace and the closest relations of friendship with the United States. For the last twenty years or so she has been a power on the European Continent only through her entente cordiale with France. Now the prostration of France and the newly risen and portentous power of the German empire to England makes a close alliance with the United States a necessity, looking to future contingencies. The bulk of the vast trade, meantime, between Europe alliance with the United States a necessity,

and America is between England and the United States. Upon this trade now hangs the British constitution. War for six months between John Bull and Brother Jounthan would precipitate a French revolution in England and is Ireland. As it is, the masses of the British people are pushing for American institutions, and there is no escape for the British aristocracy except through the closest relations of harmony with the United States. Yet again, her Majesty's North American territories, under the New Dominion, stretching alongside our own from the Atlantic to the Pacific Ocean, are evidently intended as a future important British balance of power on this continent. But this balance can be established only through the consent of the United States, and to secure this consent the equivalents of the happiest accord between the two nations must be established.

This "joint high commission" at Washington on American affairs may be ranked with a conference of all the great powers on European affairs. Anticipating a complete settle ment of all the difficulties pending between the two countries in this Washington Conference, as in our northeastern and northwestern benndary treaties, we may mark it as the opening of a new career to England and to the United States. In a generous rivalry they will only fight for the com-mercial supremacy of the seas; and the United States, England, and Russia, by land and sea, will have work enough before them in developing their vast domains, which sweep around the northern circuit of the globe. Germany will regulate the European continent in behalf of peace. The United States, under the new compact of peace and amity with England, will hold Russia on the seas and in China to terms of peace. At the same time, step by step, we may look for a revolution in Great Britain and Ireland, which will only end in breaking up the feudal system and in making the land open to all the people as we have it here. Gladstone and the English Liberals are moving, though cautiously, in this direction; but the most important movement they have yet conceived for the peaceful liberation of the British empire and its people from their fendal system is that of this "joint high commission" looking to the settlement of all existing disputes, and to a complete and comprehensive entente cordiale with the United States. The Anglo-Rebel pirate Alabama thus comes in as a great peacemaker. And what does this hitherto ominous word Alabama ignify? It means "Here we rest."

'MR. SUMNER'S ATTITUDE IN OUR BRITISH QUARREL."

From the N. Y. World. A contradiction by Mr. Sumner, which appears in the Tribune, of the statement made in the Leening Post that he insists inflexibly on atonement by England for the Queen's proclamation of neutrality as a distinct grievance, will be received with general pleasure. The denial is in these words:-

"Mr. Samner says there is no ground for the statement, editorially made by a New York journal, that he stands in the way of a settlement with Eagland, urging that no aroutration can be complete which does not include the question of the premature recognition of belligerent rights."

The speech of the eminent Senator in opposition to the Johnson-Clarendon convention was made nearly two years ago -a period long enough, amid the dizzy activities of our times, to efface its precise terms from the best memories. And now, as Mr. Webster said, in the opening of his reply to Hayne, of the mariner who has been drifting at sea in oad weather without taking observations of the sun, especially does it become us, as the sky begins to clear, to look backward to see what were the objections made to this treaty. Mr. Sumper's chief complaint was the fact that it was modelled on the treaty of 1853, which was solely for individual claims, whereas the existing unsettled British differences concerned, in addition, national grievances. He asserted that the convention negotiated by Mr. Reverdy Johnson contained no settlement of what the Senator called the "real question," which was the injury to our nation. For this he insisted there is not one word of regret or even recognition," and no affirmation of a rule of international duty in such cases. Everything was left, as in an umpirage of private claims, to a constituted commission empowered to choose an arbitrator in the event of a failure to agree, such arbitrator to be determined "by lot" out of two persons named by each side. Such was the gist of his objections. He, to be sure, expressed at much length his view of what he characterized as the "true ground of complaint" and of the bad concession of belligerency. He also developed a very absurd theory as to the true rule to govern in assessing damages; but the pivot of his speech was the silence of the treaty in respect to national as distinguished from private claims.

So much for Mr. Sumner. President Grant, in his instructions to Mr. Motley of May 15, 1869, directed Mr. Fish to

"The Government, in rejecting the recent convention, abandons neither its own claims nor those

This is distinct recognition of two classes

The instructions continue:-

"The terms of the convention, having by accident become known to the public in this country before the action upon it by the senate, were disapproved by the people with an approach to unanimity that foreshadowed, possibly, even a less favorable vote on the question of ratification than was actually

"The President believes the rejection of the Convention to have been in the interest of peace, and in the direction of a more perfect and cordial friendship between the two countries; and in this belief he fully approved the action of the Senate."

It is the popular impression, shared evidently by the Evening Post, that Mr. Sumner had and has very extreme opinions as to recognition of belligerence, and that there was great disagreement on the point between him and Mr. Fish. The views of the latter were expressed to Motley in May, 1869, thus:

"The President recognizes the right of every power, when a civil conflict has arisen within another State, and has attained a sufficient complexity, magnitude, and completeness, to define its own relations and those of its citizens and subjects toward the parties to the conflict, so far as their rights and interest are ne cessarily affected by the conflict. The necessity and propriety of the original concession of belligerency by Great Britian at the time it was made have been contested, and are not admitted. They certainly are questionable, but the President regards that concession as a part of the case only so far as it shows the beginning and the animus of that course of conduct which resulted so disastrously to the United States. It is important in that it foreshadows subsequent events."

And in September of that were they made were expressed to Motley in May, 1869, thus:

And in September of that year they were repeated in this form:-

"The President does not deny, on the contrary, he maintains, that every sovereign power decides for lizelf, on its responsibility, the question whether or not at a given time to accord the status of belligerency as to the insurgent subjects of another power, as also the larger question of the independence of such subjects, and their accession to the family of sovereign States. But the rightfulness of such an act depends on the occasion and the circumstances, and it is an act like the sovereign act of war, which the morality of the public law and practice requires

which such a deciaration is only the ind rect man' festation of a particular line of policy."

It was understood at the time that these sound propositions had Mr. Sumner's full assent. Their application is announced by Mr. Fish in his recent Motley letter, wherein he says the latter was told to place our grievance "not so much upon her issuance of the recognition of the insurgents' state of war as upon her conduct under and subsequent to such recognition." We take it that Mr. Fish and Mr. Sumner now agree that the true use of the Queen's proclamation is, in case of fair doubt as to the negligence or degree of diligence on the part of the ministry in arresting any of the cruisers, to turn the scale in our favor by the evidence of hostile enimus which it furnishes. And the whole world will agree that the proclamation ought, as a matter of courtesy, to have been postponed till after Mr. Adams' arrival in London, and that Earl Russell was wanting in international comity, if not justice, by failing to make the delay.

As to Mr. Sumper's complaint that the treaty contained no recognition on the part of Great Britain of a rule of international duty in such cases, the ground for it is nearly all removed by her neutrality legislation of

In the speech to which we refer the distingnished Senator started out with the proposition that we "seek justice as the foundation of a good understanding with Great Britain." In that the whole country is on his side. As the Northern and Southern States of this Union cannot be safely or beneficently administered by the Federal Government on the principle of hate or spite of one section for or against the other, no more can such emotions conduce to good results between independent nations with commercial contact, With substantial justice, banishing all ground for complaint, the contradiction in the Tribune to which we have referred makes us hope Mr. Sumner will be content, and will assent to honorable means of ascertaining what justice is on the points whereon this country is fairly in doubt. As to the damages inflicted by one of the cruisers, the Alabama, we have, upon the facts before us, a welldefined opinion that Great Britain ought not to resist immediate atonement and payment, and that it is not a case for arbitration. The claim for damage by the other cruisers rests on a different basis of facts.

A RAILWAY SIGNAL SYSTEM.

From the N. Y. Times. While we may feel disposed to go to the furthest verge of charity in ascribing to "accident" the sad disaster on the Hudson River Railroad, we must ask to be excused from speaking or thinking of it as an occurrence entirely unavoidable. One of the evening papers says, with an entire disregard of fact, that "no human foreeight" could have prevented this calamity. In Germany or France it is the simple truth to affirm that no such "accident" could have happened. Axles may break and car-wheels give way, but collisions never take place. A single train may come to wreck, by reason of some untoward event whose nature may be of the really unavoidable sort; but the horrors of the scene will never be intensified by the destruction of other onrushing trains. The process of prevention is one of almost primitive simplicity. A signal system, of easy arrangement, but of complete efficiency, is in operation on every mile of the track by day and night. Men are permanently stationed along the entire road at short distances, having buts in which they live, and patches of ground to cultivate. is their business to keep watch within sight of each other. During the day they signal with flags the passage of every train, and at night perform the same service by means of colored lights. In foggy weather the signals are made with horns. It is no affair of theirs whether a train is running on time or other-wise; all they have to do is to pass along the signal that a train has started and is on its way. The men being placed thus within sight of one another, a signal given just as the train starts is passed along with a rapidity that outruns the train, and reaches the next station in time to be of use.

The code of signals is, of course, se arranged as to meet emergencies which may arise at any point. If a train is off the track or delayed by some breakage, or if the roadbed or bridges get out of order, this flag or lantern telegraph summons help, warns of danger, and stops all approaching trains. The entire efficiency of the system has been thoroughly demonstrated during years of use. In practice it has been found that an unbroken current of signals can be transmitted with a speed greater than that of the swiftest locomotive, and next only to that of electricity. It is a simple question of sharp sight and quick motion on the part of men who have no other work to perform. It is idle to tell us that a train behind time, as was the Pacific express on that eventful Monday night, could not have been warned by even so simple a means as this of the destruction that lay in its path. And, therefore, we refuse to place the terrible disaster in the category of unavoidable occurrences which "no human foresight" could guard against.

No railway management is to be held guiltless while omitting, or on any pretext refusing, to adopt precautionary measures of ascer-tained value. It is, indeed, the duty of men having control of these corporations to make such precautions the first and most constant subject of study. There is no reason why we should not have in the United States quite as secure a signal service on railways as in France and Germany. This is a matter in which we cannot afford to be behind the times.

FUNDING THE DEBT.

From the N. Y. Tribune. At last-much later than we had hopedthe Secretary of the Treasury gives notice that he will attempt to fund the bulk of the national debt in bonds bearing lower rates of interest, so as to reduce the burden of that debt. If fifteen hundred millions of the fivetwenties can be funded even at five per cent., the debt will be lessened by the sam of fif-teen millions per annum; if all the bonds advertised by the Secretary should be taken at par on his terms, the saving to the American people would be rather more than twenty-five millions per annum. Let us all do our best, therefore, to promote and secure the funding

Other governments, as well as many companies, seek to borrow money in excess of their present liabilities: not so the Government of the United States. It seeks to borrow the means of paying what it row owes, and for no other purpose. If the fifteen hun-dred millions it wants should all be subscribed forthwith, there would not be one dollar more of its promises afloat thereafter than there are now. Every dollar subscribed to these new loans will cancel and extinguish a dollar of outstanding debt. The money market, whether of this country or of the world, will be nowise disturbed or straitened

by the success of these loans. On the 6th of March, when the books for subscription are to be opened, it is hoped

that peace between Germany and France will have been restored. The cloud of war which hung over the Black Sea will have been effectually dispelled. The misunderstandings between our country and Great Britain seem on the eve of settlement. We see no reason, therefore, to doubt that the 6th of next month will be a favorable time to attempt the funding of the debt.

Should the effort result in failure, the sole cause of that failure will be the dilapidated condition of our currency. The Secretary ex-acts payment for his new bonds either in outstanding bonds of the Government or in coin. We apprehend that this precludes subscrip-tions from the great body of the American people. We would gladly appeal to those who have a few hundreds or thousands in a savings bank to withdraw it and invest it in the new bonds; but they would receive it in greenbacks or national bank notes, which they would have to sell at 10 or 12 per cent. discount in order to procure specie wherewith to pay their subscriptions; and this, we judge, most of them will hesitate to do. If the effort to fund fails, the disparity between coin and currency must bear the blame. And then we must all work the harder to appreciate our greenbacks to a par with gold.

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