

SPRIT OF THE PRESS.

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

"IRISH FREE TRADE" VS. PROTECTION. From the Chicago Bureau.

There is great power in a name, especially in politics. The name "free trade" has been popular in Ireland for more than a century.

At the same time Henry Grattan, the leader of this movement for freeing Irish trade, in proposing, in the Irish Parliament, an amendment to the address to the crown, said:—

"The only effectual remedy that can be applied to the sufferings of this kingdom, that can either improve its credit or supply its wants, is to open its ports for the exportation of all its manufactures; that it is evident to every unprejudiced mind that Great Britain would derive as much benefit from this measure as Ireland itself, but that Ireland cannot subsist without it."

As the sequel to these measures of agitation, or rather as a means to hold the Irish people in subjection while they crushed the American Rebellion, their waging, under George Washington and the Continental Congress, Lord North, on the 13th December, 1775, introduced into the English Parliament three propositions—to permit, first, the export of woollen goods; and second, a free trade between Ireland and the English settlements in America, the West Indies, and Africa.

On page 128 of his history, referring to the period of 1779 and 1780, he says:—"To force from the reluctant England a free trade, and the repeal or rather declaratory nullification of the existing law, which required the Irish Parliament to submit to the bills of the English Privy Council before they could presume to pass them—these were, in few words, the two great objects which the leaders of the volunteers kept now steadily before them."

He then proceeds to recite that at this time many of the citizens of Dublin, Waterford and other cities, backed by the women of Ireland, adopted non-importation agreements to the effect that until the British laws prohibiting the export of cottons, woollens, and provisions from Ireland should be repealed, they would not buy, sell, or wear any article of British manufacture.

"Resolved, That the unjust, illiberal, and impolitic opposition given by many self-interested people of Great Britain to the proposed extension of the trade and commerce of this kingdom, should be resented and indignantly repudiated."

"Resolved, That we will not, directly or indirectly, import or use goods of any trade, the production of which is prohibited by any law, till an enlightened public meeting, founded on principles of justice, shall appear to acquiesce in the inhabitants of certain manufacturing towns of Great Britain, who have taken so active a part in opposing the regulations proposed in favor of the trade of Ireland, and until they appear to entertain sentiments of respect and affection for their fellow-subjects of this kingdom."

"At the same time the names of such traders as continued to sell English goods were gratuitously published in the Dublin papers, for the purpose of drawing upon them the indignation of the people. Commenting on these acts as a retaliation for "the meanness of the manufacturers and traders of England, and for the measures adopted by the English Parliament, at their dictation, to crush the trade and paralyze the industry of Ireland," the historian says (p. 129):—

"The retaliation was just, and no means that could have been adopted could equal the activity of the conduct of the English towards the productive industry of Ireland. Englishmen had a Parliament obedient to the dictates of the encroaching spirit of English trade—the Irish people had not yet established their freedom, nor armed themselves with the realisable weapon of free institutions. They were obliged to legislate for themselves, and were justified by the exigency in adopting any means to enforce the national will."

"It seems strange that it should be necessary to defend the measure of holding up to scorn the traitors who could expose in their shops, articles of foreign production, every article of which was a representative of their country's impoverishment and decay. But the English press denounced it as the policy of savages, and pointed out the Irish people to the contumely of Europe."

"At the same time the English manufacturers, ever cautious of present sacrifices to secure permanent advantages, flooded the country towns with the accumulated products of the woollen manufacture, which, owing to the (American) war and other causes, had remained in their hands. They offered their goods to the small shopkeepers at the lowest possible price, and desired them to name their own time for payment, and they succeeded in inducing many of the low and embarrassed servitors of trade, through their necessities and by the seductive promise of long credit, to become traitors to the cause of Irish industry."

good men back into political life we shall have to adopt our Government machinery to the conditions in which society now finds itself. The men of education and respectability in this community are rarely men of leisure; they are all as busy as they can possibly be. They have either to make fortunes, or keep them, and keeping fortunes in the present state of our industry is nearly as difficult as making them. They have, too, to administer nearly all the churches of the country, and to act as trustees for the vast number of persons who are, in every community, incapable of taking charge of their own affairs.

Then we have divided responsibility in such a way as to take all heart out of persons of a reforming turn, because no matter what we do we can never feel sure that we have got hold of the real author of any abuse, and as a matter of fact we hardly ever do get him. Considering the way in which a merchant or lawyer must now work, to keep pace with the ordinary demands on him, it seems hard to ask him to see to it that none but the best men are nominated for Congress, and the Legislature, and for the three city Superior Courts, and for the Marine Court, and for the Police Courts, and civil District Courts, and the aldermanships, and the assistant aldermanships, and the Corporation, and the Mayoralty, and the District-Attorney'sship, and Corporation Councilship, and Sheriffalty, and for the Governorship, and Secretaryship, and the Canal Board, and Prison Inspectorship, and so on. Why, the looking after all these things has to be a profession, and it is a profession, and in a community where all decent men are occupied by honest callings, it has naturally become a rascally profession.

No such system could be worked by the community at large, unless it was a community of large landed proprietors, with plenty of time on their hands, like that of the South before the war, or a community of free-lancers, like the Athenians, who passed their time in the market place discussing candidates and nominations, every man knowing his neighbor.

Undoubtedly the popular illustrated papers of the day might be of great service in the dissemination of correct art ideas, but that they fail to a great extent in this mission, is an equally palpable and lamentable fact. Lacking neither capital, brains, nor enterprise, there is no reason why our American publishers should not send out papers in every respect equal to the best European prints. Nor is it necessary in order to do this to reproduce exactly their pictures, as has been done of late, to an extent that has given to many of our most popular prints a monotonous degree of uniformity in illustration.

THE DIFFICULTY OF GETTING GOOD MEN INTO POLITICAL LIFE.

We have already called attention to Mr. Hoppin's excellent address to the members of the Union League Club, but the subject which he raised cannot be too carefully considered. He said that "the practical withdrawal of great numbers of respectable and intelligent citizens of the United States from public life, and their growing indifference to public matters, is one of the most discouraging facts in our history. We act as if we believed that good government would come of itself, like the free air of heaven, without any effort on our own parts to create it. We appear to think we have the theorem to engage in politics or not, as our tastes or temporary interests may determine."

All this is melancholy, but it is true; it is the more melancholy because it is so often said, and with so little effect. It is said, in substance, in all Thanksgiving sermons, and in all the better class of Fourth of July orations, and in large majority of such commencement orations as touch on politics. It is said in newspaper and magazine articles, and in lectures. Everybody admits it; but when we come to talk of a remedy, most people turn their eyes in pious resignation to heaven, or shrug their shoulders. Now, everybody knows we are not disposed to shield "educated and respectable" shirkers of their duty, but then it is but right, while condemning them, to take account of the difficulties there are in the way of their doing their duty.

We might if we went into details show these to be very numerous, but we shall confine ourselves to one, and that is the complication of the political machine. The machine which our fathers worked, and which the English work to-day, was far simpler than the one we work. The number of officers elected in England is very small. In fact, it may be said that by voting once in four or five years for one or two members of the House of Commons an Englishman exerts all the influence he can exert in the Government. Through that he pronounces his opinion with regard to the administration of justice in all its grades and branches, the collection and disbursement of the taxes, the state of the army and navy, the foreign policy, the condition and relief of the poor, and so on. The consequence is that by concentrating his attention on the character, and history, and opinions of one or two men, he discharges his whole political duty. If he does not like the judges, or the condition of the finances, or of the State, or of the army, or of the railroad system, he has only to come down on the county or borough members of the House of Commons, and the members come down on the Ministry; and when a great many county and borough members, feeling the pressure behind them, come down on the Ministry together, the thing is set to rights. Nothing can well be simpler, or easier to manage, or require less sacrifice of time.

A list of things in some respects similar prevailed in this State, and in nearly all the Eastern States, before 1846. The number of elective officers was small, and the responsibility concentrated on a few heads. To be sure, the American citizen had two Legislatures to elect, and two "ministries" to look after, where the Englishman had only one, but still he was able to look to the Governor for the proper administration of justice, the proper regulation of the prisons, the proper collection and outlay of the taxes, in fact, for the proper working of the greater part of the administrative machinery. He had, indeed, only to concentrate his attention at every election on one or two men, to be sure that he was discharging his duty to the State effectually. In those days, too, the strain of business was not nearly so severe as it is now, and men of respectability and education had more time at their disposal.

There was only monthly mail communication with Europe. In this city, business with the interior of the State, or what was then called the West, was almost completely suspended as soon as the frosts closed the river and canals. The community, too, in every State was small, and the managers simple, and the demands of charity and society few and not very exacting. The stream of life, in fact, flowed on with a sluggishness of which we have now little idea. Merchants, and lawyers, and ministers, therefore, had an amount of time at their disposal of which they now know nothing, and having it, they give it to politics.

If we contrast the state of things here now with with the state of things here forty or fifty years ago, we must perceive that to get

ILLUSTRATED PAPERS.

From the Boston Traveller. Undoubtedly the popular illustrated papers of the day might be of great service in the dissemination of correct art ideas, but that they fail to a great extent in this mission, is an equally palpable and lamentable fact. Lacking neither capital, brains, nor enterprise, there is no reason why our American publishers should not send out papers in every respect equal to the best European prints. Nor is it necessary in order to do this to reproduce exactly their pictures, as has been done of late, to an extent that has given to many of our most popular prints a monotonous degree of uniformity in illustration.

If the illustrations reproduced were well selected, it would be better. But it often happens that villainously bad pictures are published abroad, and these are as eagerly seized upon as any. It seems that a picture has only to be startling to commend itself to the borrowing propensities of our editors. As a case in point, there are sketches, better called scotchies, by one A. Boyd Houghton, which have been largely copied, in all their bad qualities, by our papers. What could be worse than the "Coasting in Omaha," or the "Hunting Buffaloes," both of which may be seen in Every Saturday?

Vague, to a meaningless extent, uncertain in drawing, their figures make anything in heaven or earth, they are given prominent places in a publication which has talent enough in its management to discriminate between a good and bad picture. If in intrinsic qualities the above-named pictures are bad, in aesthetic qualities the French war pictures are worse. No good can come of a representation of a deserted battlefield, scattered with ghastly corpses and dead horses. Such pictures breed nightmares. They are horrible, but have no pathos. They appeal to no other sentiment than that morbid craving for horrors, which is too much gratified already by our tenth-rate papers in their vivid and overdrawn scenes of murder and sin.

It cannot be said that our publishers are obliged to go abroad for their publications. It might have been said twenty-five years ago. But to-day we have artists who could, if inducements, pecuniary and other, were offered, produce pictures in every respect equal to those that are brought from over the sea. Every picture reproduced from a foreign paper is so much money withheld from American artists—an injustice to them of which they rightfully complain. There is both a lack of patriotism and of sense in seeking abroad what can be found at home. We are constantly clamoring for more rapid progress in art, and at the same time withholding our aid. We are forever paying gold where we might buy with greenbacks, and do better in our bargain. To verify all we have said we refer the reader to the last numbers of our most popular illustrated periodicals, and ask their candid judgment as to which are most pleasing, the foreign or the American pictures.

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HEADQUARTERS REPUBLICAN State Central Committee

PHILADELPHIA, LONDON, FEBRUARY 15, 1871.

PENNSYLVANIA, No. 1105 CHESNUT Street, PHILADELPHIA.

At a meeting of the Officers and the Philadelphia Members of the Republican State Central Committee of Pennsylvania, Held this day,

On motion of JAMES W. M. NEWLIN, seconded by THOMAS G. PARKER, the following Resolutions were unanimously adopted:—

Whereas, It is well known in political circles that a combination has been entered into between some so-called Republicans and certain influential members of the Democratic party, to create by legislative action a number of commissions to govern the city of Philadelphia:

And whereas, Said commissions are to be organized in the same manner, and with the same objects, as those now in operation in New York city, whereby the property of all its citizens is at the mercy of irresponsible officials, and a large sum of money has been raised by the leading Democratic politicians of that city to secure the consummation of this scheme in order to carry Pennsylvania for the Democracy in 1872:

And whereas, The safety of the Republican party requires the utmost fidelity of intention on the part of its Representatives, in order to secure its triumph in the next Presidential campaign,

Therefore Resolved, That the proposition to mis-govern the city of Philadelphia by Commissions, and the attempt by legislative action to place the property of its citizens at the disposal of persons not enjoying the confidence of the public, and to deprive the people of the right of self-government, meets with our unqualified condemnation, and we call upon the Republican Senators and Representatives at Harrisburg to vote against the same.

Resolved, That the people and the press be and they are hereby earnestly requested to take active measures to prevent the introduction into our midst of the odious system of government under which the people of New York City are now suffering.

MALION H. DICKINSON, Chairman. ELIAB WARD, R. B. TITTELMARY, WM. ELLIOTT, CHARLES A. MILLER, WM. R. LEEDS, JOHN E. ADDICKS, DANIEL P. RAY, WILLIAM B. CONNELL, THOMAS C. PARKER, ALFRED C. HARMER, JAMES H. PUGH, HORATIO GATES JONES, WILLIAM RITTENHOUSE.

SECRETARIES, GEORGE W. HAMERSLY, M. S. QUAY, JAMES W. M. NEWLIN.

TREASURER, HENRY H. BINGHAM.

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