

SPRIT OF THE PRESS.

EDITORIAL OPINIONS OF THE LEADING JOURNALS UPON CURRENT TOPICS—COMPILED EVERY DAY FOR THE EVENING TELEGRAPH.

THE COMMUNE AND LIBERTY.

From the N. Y. Times.

One of the saddest things about the errors or extravagances of a good cause is that they inflict irreparable injury on the cause itself. In Europe, for many years to come, the crimes of the Parisian socialist democracy will be charged upon liberty, and the first demands of the laboring classes and the cities of the Continent will be confused with the wild ideas and savage crimes of the French Communists. If the excesses of the socialist workmen in Paris produce such a profound impression of horror and disgust here, we can imagine what the sentiment of the middle and intelligent classes of Europe must be concerning these crimes. Everything tends to make these excesses appalling and hideous to the world. The outbreak of the laboring classes was not against a tyranny in the flush of its power. It was not, like the revolution of '93, an explosion of the masses against the abuses and wrongs of centuries, inflicted by the powerful. The Government which was attacked so fiercely was the choice of the people; it was, at least nominally, a republic. The moment chosen was when the country lay bleeding and prostrate beneath a foreign invader, when these very laborers had not the courage to attack. The authorities whom the masses thus attempted to overthrow were themselves weakened by their long struggle with the public enemy.

As if to defy the peculiar and most cherished sentiments of France and Europe, the war-governing power in Paris declared war, not only against their bleeding country, but against art, property, and religion—against civilization itself. For a time, the world was favored with the spectacle of a city governed by its day-laborers and *ouvriers d'urgence*. They heard property declared a robbery, religion a superstition, and the arts a memorial of barbarism. The ancient monuments of glory were overthrown; churches sacked and desecrated; the obligations of business declared broken; marriage made a contract at pleasure; and the ministers of religion banished or murdered. To crown all, the working men in their defeat attempted to destroy the city they could not govern; and with the ruff-raff of all nations, and both sexes who gather in the slums of a great city, they devoted and gashed with the immortal genius of man, and demolished what no wealth or culture can ever restore. They did at last, amid the blackened and blood-stained ruins of the capital they had professed to desire to free from the control of their countrymen.

Now, such horrors and crimes as these put back the cause the Parisian laborers had at heart at least half a century. The very name of "working-men's organizations," "associations," and "unions," will smell in the nostrils of Europe for generations. It is undoubtedly true that the laboring classes of Europe have not had their fair share of the blessings of life. The rich and the capitalists have used their labor for centuries, and have taken an undue proportion of the profits. They have a fair claim to more than they now get of the world's good things. They were, through universal suffrage, and, above all, through international trades unions, beginning to obtain more of their just rights. But suddenly there comes a blow upon them from the house of their friends. "What the laboring class do with their power, when they get it, is shown in Paris" will be the ready objection to every new privilege they claim. "The French *ouvriers* prove what trades unions and working-men's associations lead to!" Such will be the feeling of Europe at any proposed political elevation of the working-class, or at the prospect of greater power in the trades associations.

The municipal idea of the Paris Communists had, undoubtedly, much justice in it. They seem to have demanded for Paris exactly what all English-speaking peoples give to their large cities—the election of their city officials, the control of their education and militia, and, in most branches, a thorough self-government. They are privileges which ought to be granted to every French city, and would constitute the best means of political education. It seems, at this distance, a piece of stupidity that the Versailles Government did not at once concede them. The result, however, now is that municipal government is set back, also, with other reforms, throughout France. The cities will still be governed by a central power. The crimes of the Communists have destroyed the Commune. The people will attach all the horrors and outrages of the last four days to the very name of Communal independence, and France, under any Government that may be established, will still be a centralized administration.

QUAKER REFORM.

From the N. Y. Tribune.

The great annual meeting of the Society of Friends held last week in their capital, Philadelphia, offered one or two significant hints as to the present status of that powerful body. Propositions were made that the governing Committee or General Council for the year should hereafter be composed of members of both sexes in equal proportion. The Society also altered its discipline so as to forbid the manufacture or sale of all spirituous liquors by its members, the prohibition formerly having made a distinction, more nice than wise, between distilled and fermented drinks. Action was also taken against the use of tobacco.

These late reformatory movements strike us oddly, coming from a sect noted since its foundation for its temperance and admission of the equality of woman. But the Quakers, though one of the most progressive of religious bodies, are paradoxically one of the slowest moving; taking their position, as they did at first, in the pioneer line not only of free thought but of work for humanity, and allowing the widest liberty for individual belief, they are not easily moved by outside pressure. Perhaps no body, either religious or political, has ever exercised an influence at the same time so powerful and noiseless in our social structure, they have worked by a silent, moral *vis inertia*, instead of the vehement propaganda of other reformers. Their strength has been to sit still; yet the truth they taught has been set before the people with a curious clearness: an every-day proof of how much higher eloquence lies in lives than words. Beneath this sectarian character are the individual caution, shrewdness, and keen sense of justice, which stamp the Quaker to be known of all men, as a mild, good taste does the Englishman, or an invincible humor for the Scotchman, or the Covenanters. A man in a shad-bellied coat will give you food for a year with his right hand, but you shall not cheat his

left of a penny. These traits, insignificant in themselves, assume importance when the Society owns the influence of outside popular movements. The heavy mercury, not volatile water, is the true index to the changes of the weather. In the matter of woman's equality, the society has made but a slight change; only making a matter of professed creed what it has always tacitly taught by practice. But the action on liquor and tobacco is more significant. The shrewd Quaker has not only struck the nail, but driven it into the heart of the subject. The manufacture and sale of liquor are made matter of discipline as well as its use, while in other religious sects the wealthy tavern-keeper, distiller, or holder of the whisky ring is permitted to hold a prying, profitable place in the sanctuary, while the poor wretch, struggling vainly with his hereditary thirst and weakened by against the poison they put into his lips, is driven from the fold into outer darkness with threats of unquenchable fire and undying worms. It is not temperance pledges, nor temperance orators, nor even inebriate asylums, that will set this matter right among us. The cure of its victims will not remove malaria. When the liquor-seller as well as the drunkard has his share not only of promised hell-fire in the next world from his religious teachers, but of effective punishment in this, the temperance movement will be at last put upon its proper basis. The Quaker, standing on the safe ground of truth against expediency, with his clear eye and steady hand out the first link of the Gordian knot of slavery for us. What he will do with the knotty problems of Indian affairs or temperance remains to be proved. His first movements at least indicate that the tasks given him are not too great for him to conquer.

THREE POLITICAL SPOOKS.

From the N. Y. World.

This country is just now a good deal plagued with ghosts, spectres, and what the old Germans called *doppel-ganglers* and the Scotch "doubles." Some of these apparitions devote themselves to making private homes unhappy, others to troubling public matters. One of the latter class, under the name and guise of Andrew Johnson, has just been making a speech at Knoxville, in Tennessee, which is just enough like the genuine speeches of that ex-President to deceive his bitter enemies, while it contains suggestions so peculiar and original that had they really been made by Mr. Johnson he would be entitled to rank with such great inventors in legislation as Draco, Confucius, Wendell Phillips, and Felix Pyat. Of course the spook had had enough to do with the telegraph operators by using Mr. Johnson's favorite allusion to the fact that he had "passed through political life, enjoying all its honors from the village alderman to the highest office within the gift of the people." He next ventured on a bolder flight, and observed with much apparent satisfaction: "After running my life-course—a mighty course it has proved—I can truly say I have violated no pledge, sacrificed no principle." From these harmless observations in a vein not unlike Mr. Johnson's, the spook advanced to propound an astonishing plan for the elevation of mankind, "physical, mental, and moral." This plan is as brief as it is brilliant. Instead of sending "criminals to the penitentiary, where they become the rivals of honest mechanics," this elvish orator proposes to divide them into two classes, to be thus summarily dealt with:—"The first class I would hang; the second I would deprive of the power of propagating their species." If this be done, the pixie coolly says that "in a few centuries man would become the image of his Creator."

The spook of Andrew Johnson is, however, in innocuous brownie in comparison with sulphur-breathing imp which has succeeded in passing itself off upon a reporter of the *Herald* in Georgia as the "ex-President of the Confederate States," and in that character has dictated to the reporter a discourse on the "Lost Cause," which combines the political sagacity and practical good sense of a Wendell Phillips with the unobtrusive modesty of a Zachariah Chandler. Doubtless the imp was stimulated to this exploit by the elaborate prominence given by Horace Greeley, in a speech recently delivered by that great agriculturist at Galveston, Texas, to the person of Mr. Jefferson Davis as a means of reaching and soothing the Southern heart. In this Galveston oration Mr. Greeley appears explaining that he gave bail for Mr. Davis, not because he thought so much of Mr. Davis as the act would seem to imply, but because he believed the Southern people to be so much interested in Mr. Davis that to set him at liberty and put him in the way of amusing himself by playing at the speech-making would greatly conciliate the Southern heart and lead the Southern heart to lean kindly towards the liberator of the fallen chieftain. In seizing this opportunity the imp, it must be confessed, showed a certain amount of artistic perception. Although the Southern people have little cause to remember the administration of their affairs by Mr. Davis either with pride or pleasure, they are much too gallant a people not to have been tenderly moved towards him by the vicarious humiliations which he suffered for them at the hands of Lee and Johnston. Mr. Davis was certainly the least respected and most unpopular man in the South. He would have continued so to be had not Stanton with calculating malignity made a martyr of him, in defiance alike of decency, of justice, and of sound policy. Since his liberation from Fortress Monroe, therefore, Mr. Davis has been to the Southern people a kind of concentrated impersonation and symbol of that radical spite and rage against themselves to which Horace Greeley so earnestly attributes all the delay which has occurred in re-establishing peace within our borders. The imp, therefore, which took upon itself the task of making speeches for Mr. Davis in the *Herald* immediately upon Mr. Greeley's revival of the Confederate President at Galveston, chose his time well. He knew that the Southern people would be bound, if only by consideration for Mr. Greeley, to allow anything which Mr. Davis might say, or be reported to say, to pass unrebuked, no matter how indiscreet or out of taste or foreign from the feelings of the Southern people themselves it might be. Of course, the object of the imp must be supposed to be mischief, but the time has happily come by when such operations could produce any deep and abiding effect on any but the most thoroughly cloud-hopping of fly-gobblers at the North.

The third political spook of the moment seems to be a being of gentler mould, and he has certainly taken upon him "to disfigure or present" a more innocuous mortal. He is a cobold who turns up in Texas as Horace Greeley, making the very speeches to which we have already alluded. The real Horace Greeley, we need hardly say, has never left New York. He has been, indeed, secluded from the public for a short time, as the *Tribune* Tuesday morning ingeniously

admitted by publishing a most interesting narrative from his pen of his sufferings in Ludlow Street Jail, to which unpleasant resort he found his way in consequence of some disastrous financial events not unconnected with strawberry farming. The pen which depicted so vividly many years ago the misdeeds of a captive in the Parisian prison of Clichy has not lost its cunning. Mr. Greeley seems to have been worse treated in Ludlow street than he was in Clichy, possibly because the people in the former place, understanding his speech, may have been exasperated by his frequent and profane profanity. He states that he went to prison in order to learn the inconveniences of captivity, which the tone of the former and of the latter is to be traced to the circumstance that Mr. Davis and Mr. Johnson look bitterly back to Presidencies come and gone, while Mr. Greeley looks brightly forward to a Presidency still to be. Should the dream be fulfilled, common gratitude will require Mr. Greeley to endorse his cobold by making Mr. Davis his Secretary of State and sending Mr. Johnson as Minister to France.

THE SUCCESSOR TO PRESIDENT GRANT

From the N. Y. Golden Age.

If Mr. Greeley, in coming home from the South, should bring with him, as a gift from that portion of our common land, a popular nomination to the Presidency of the United States, this expressed wish, by one section of the Union, ought to be promptly ratified by the other.

The next Presidency, judged from to-day's point of view, is like the raspberry plant—which takes one year to grow the stalk and a second year to bear the fruit. We are now growing the stalk of next year's Presidential nomination.

The farmer of Chappaqua, who went southward on the simple errand of carrying an agricultural address to Texas, is now everywhere hailed by Southern men as a Northern man in whose honesty they trust, and whose kindness they reciprocate. If among all the Northern candidates the South prefers this charitable statesman, we believe the North would assent to the wishes of its late enemies, and give to the Southern a President true to the best interests of the people.

A renomination of General Grant would be so injudicious that it ought to be no longer discussed. To say nothing of the great fact that his administration has been but a mediocre success, and not worth repeating for another four years, the victorious North should not a second time impose on the whole country the conqueror of one-half of it. This is not the way to heal the wounds of a civil war. Peace, magnanimity, fraternal kindness—this is the spirit which we hope the North will seek to exhibit toward the South in the next Presidential canvass.

No man in the nation more signally represents this spirit than the kind-hearted Northern farmer who has gone to the South to plant with his own hand an olive of peace in that fire-scarred land. Good men in the Southern States, of all parties, might so generally unite in urging his nomination that the North, notwithstanding its lingering severity of temper, will undoubtedly respect the suggestion.

As for ourselves, without being unduly forward or rashly persistent, we are free to say that our first choice early should be Mr. Grant. This is a large-minded and humane statesman—the Benjamin Franklin of his time.

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