SPIRIT OF THE PRESS.

EDITORIAL OPINIONS OF THE LEADING JOURNALS UPON CUBRENT TOPICS-COMPILED EVERY DAY FOR THE EVENING TELEGRAPH.

THE RAILWAYS OF THE UNITED STATES.

According to Mr. Henry V. Poor's Rail-road Manual for 1871-2, now just published, there were in operation, in the United States, on the first day of January, 1871, 53,145 miles of railroad, of which 6145 were opened the past year-a greater number than in [any previous year by 2600 miles. The total earnings of these roads during the past year were \$450,000,000. The gross tonnage transported over them equalled 125,000,000 tons, having a value of more than \$10,000,-000,000. Their cost may be put down, in round numbers, at \$2,400,000,000. Their mileage, in ratio to the population of the country, is as 1 to 723. Their earnings equal \$11.75 to each inhabitant. The tonnage transported equalled 34 tons to each; the value of this tonnage equalled \$282 to each. "All this vast tonnage and commerce," Mr. Poor remarks, "has been wholly created by the reduction effected in the cost of transportation. The cost, for example, of transporting a ton of Indian corn or wheat over ordinary highways will equal 20 cents per mile. At such a rate the former will bear transportation only 125 miles to market, where its value is seventyfive cents per bushel; the latter only 250 miles, where its value is \$1.50 per bushel. With such highways only, the most valuable of our cereals will have no commercial value outside of circles having radii of 125 and 250 miles respectively. Upon railroads, the cost of transporting these articles equals only one and a quarter cents per ton per mile. With these works, consequently, the areas within which corn and wheat will have a commercial value will be drawn upon radii of 1600 and 3200 miles respectively. The area of a circle having a radius of 125 miles is 40,087 square miles; that of a circle drawn on a radius of 1600 miles is 160 times greater, or 8,042,406 square miles. Such difference. enormous as it is, only measures the value of the new agencies employed in transporta-

The rapid growth of this colossal interest is as wonderful as is its present magnitude. In 1851 there were only 8876 miles of line in actual operation in the United States. Their total earnings that year were \$39,466,358-a sum which equalled only \$1.55 per head of population. In 1860 the number of miles in operation were 30,635. Their earnings were \$153,175,000, or \$4.98 per head. In 1870 their earnings equalled \$11.75 per head. The annual increase of earnings from 1850 to 1860 was \$11,370,864; from 1860 to 1870, \$29,682,500, annually. With the progress of railroads in unoccupied districts it is probable that from 1870 to 1880 the rate of increase of earnings will be, annually, one dollar per head of our population. Such a rate would give for the present decade an annual increase of, say \$43,000,000, or aggregate earnings of nearly \$700,000,000, yearly, at its

tion, and the results achieved, compared with

The rate of increase of our population is about two and one-half per centum annually. Mr. Poor estimates, from the rapid progress made in the mechanic arts, that the productive capacity of our people increases in fourfold ratio to that of their numbers, and that, consequently, the wealth of the country doubles with every decade. It is certain that the railroad tonnage of the country was three times greater in 1870 than it was in 1860. This rapid increase of national wealth is solving, most satisfactorily, the problem of the future of our national debt. If the wealth of the country increases at the rate of ten per cent. annually, the revenues will increase at a similar rate, provided there is no reduction in that of taxation. But the rate of taxation may be largely decreased each year, without any reduction in the amount of revenues collected. Such is the fortunate position of this country, compared with that of any other. In no other is the annual increase in the population and wealth an element of first-rate importance in the calculations of the statesman. The position of our Chief Minister of Finance, consequently, is a most fortunate one. The wind and tide are always in his favor. Each year one million are added to the list of tax-payers. Their constantly and rapidly increasing means will more and more confirm them in their traditional policy of considering their public debts in the light of commercial transactions, to be fully liquidated at some future day. In other countries the payment of publie debts is a proposition not to be entertained. They are institutions-a part, as it were, of the Governments themselves. In this country those who contracted our public debt are the very parties who are to pay it. and they will never rest satisfied till it is fully liquidated, as have been those created on two previous occasions, and which were far more burdensome, considering the number and wealth of our people, than the present one. Of the ultimate extent to which the con-

struction of railroads in this country will be carried no estimate can be formed. They are to become the common highways of our people, and their progress in the future is likely to be much more rapid than in the past. Even in the old States a great extent of mileage is now under construction. The adoption of narrow gauges, of from two to three feet, by reducing largely the cost of these works, will greatly stimulate their construction. There are now in the State of Massachusetts one mile of railroad to every five miles of area. A similar ratio for the whole country would give an aggregate of more than 600,000 miles of line! While such an extent of line is not possible, there is no doubt that upon an area of 1,500,000 square miles railroads will be rapidly constructed, till the ratio now existing in Massachusetts is reached. Their progress will, of course, depend largely upon that of our population; but their construction will proceed in a ratio much more rapid than that of our numbers.

One of the most interesting facts in connection with these works is the enormous power which our great companies are rapidly acquiring, by means of consolidations of connecting or competing lines. The Pennsylvania Railroad Company, for example, now controls, absolutely, 3318 miles of line, the cost of which is \$247,970,632, with earnings of \$50,634,004 for the past year! The same company has an indirect control over a large additional extent of line. Its revenues are almost equal to those of an empire. Other great companies are not far behind. The power possessed and wielded by them, whether for good or evil, is now attracting unusual attention, and must take the first place among the subjects that are henceforth to agitate the

It is to be said, in commendation of Mr. Poor's work, that it is purely impartial. He gives a faithful abstract of the couditions of the various companies, leaving it for the public to form their own conclusions. To | in the weekly Tribune. Doubtless the object

aid in this he has presented comparative of this popular personal liking is a quite ficti-statements of the conditions of all our great tious entity, not at all corresponding save in companies for a period of ten years. This is companies for a period of ten years. This is a very important and valuable feature of the work, as such a length of time is sure to bring out whatever is good or bad in the management or condition of a company. The whole subject of railway economy has now become one of paramount importance, and we are glad to welcome this valuable contribution to it.

THE NEW EDUCATION.

From the N. Y. Tribune. The annual burden of commencement reports pressing once more upon our columns. will hardly be received this year with the familiar ridicule of college education with which, every twelvemonth, a certain class of reformers used to stir the ire of venerable dons and callow graduates. When the young gentlemen who had spent four years in the society of Horace, Euripides, and Euclid, learned all about Greek roots and accidents, and acquired more or less intimacy with boating, tobacco, and the higher mathematics, came upon the platform on Commencement day, to salute their assembled friends in a language those friends could not understand, and to declaim a few rhetorical commonplaces on lofty themes of criticism and philosophy, it was so easy to doubt whether the acquirements thus exhibited were really of much use in this busy practical world that the friends of classical education began to fear for the destruction of all liberal culture in the clamor of the utilitarian school which the summer commence ments never failed to excite. And indeed the colleges did a great deal to deserve criticism. They fell into the mistake of believing that the liberal culture which sufficed to adorn one century was broad enough to satisfy another. The curriculum of our best colleges ten years ago was substantially that of our grandfathers' times-excellent and comprehensive in that day; but now, when the relations between the scholar and the worker have been so strangely altered, when science has taken such an enormous development, the learning which used to embrace all that the most accomplished student wanted is only a small partimportant, if you will, but a small part after all—of a really catholic education.

But it is clear that in the matter of education we are now taking a new departure. No one can study the condition of our colleges without perceiving how rapidly new systems are displacing the old, and how our most enlightened instructors are quietly settling the old feud about classical studies, not by degrading Greek and Latin from their timehonored eminence, but by combining with them all the new arts and practical modern sciences upon which so much stress has been laid in recent years. It is a sort of combination which would have been thought impossible a generation since; yet every year shows it more and more successful, and the annual commencements become in consequence more interesting to the outside multitude, and less open to the little jokes of the irreverent. Thus the colleges are reforming themselves, and giving us a broad culture which looks equally towards intellectual strength and refinement, and immediate utility. The great seats of learning are opening scientific schools, and expending their best energies to adapt them to the needs of the country. Practical agriculture, chemistry, mining, metal-lurgy, are taught with at least as much care and thoroughness as the theoretical sciences. To take examples that lie at our own door-Columbia College has come to place upon its scientific course and its school of mines a dependence quite as great as upon its classical lectures; and the University of the City of New York has just enlarged and reorganized its scientific department, and established for the arts and sciences a complete

and separate faculty.

It is not only in the kind of education supplied that our colleges are advancing, but they have also become far more liberal in offering it to the whole people. Thus the New York University announces that hereafter its collegiate course will be absolutely free to all. Cornell University not only furnishes an education entirely without charge, but goes a step further, and gives every student a chance to work for his living. This is a characteristically American improvement upon the old system of charitable foundations; for Mr. Cornell understands that to let a man earn his bread and butter is better than to give it to him. At Ithaca, accordingly, the poor lad may be supported without sacrificing his independence, and take instruction in books, in the arts, in the trades, and in domestic economy all together. There, too, theory and practice are united in a more perfect manner than in any other establishment of learning in the world; and if experience justify the expectations of its estimable founder, this institution will mark the era of a totally new sort of university culture. Again, Vassar College represents the principle established only within a few years—if, indeed, it is quite established yet-that woman has a right to the best education the age is capable of affording; that all the sciences, all the arts, must be open to her if she chooses to follow them; and whatever we may think of her right to join in political shindies, stuff ballot-boxes, or build barricades, we shall steadfastly maintain her right to the very highest intellectual culture, or the pursuit of any honest knowledge. A college such as this cannot fail, and cannot but be the exemplar of many others. The University of Michigan is no whit behind Cornell and Vassar; Harvard, Yale, and many more are likewise broadening the culture they offer, and opening wider and wider means of access to it. A more complete and many-sided education; greater facilities for extending it in any one desired direction without being compelled to prosecute it in others not desired; easier approach to it alike for both sexes and all classes these appear the most marked tendencies of late collegiate progress. With them our colleges seem to be entering upon a new career of usefulness, in which we shall all wish them prosperity and honor.

HORACE GREELEY FOR PRESIDENT.

From the N. Y. World. It is not to be disguised that the candidacy of Horace Greeley for the Presidency is taking hold of the Republican masses in a way that troubles and disconcerts the mere politicians and wire-pulling managers of the party. That he is an inconceivably better representative of all the ideas of his party than General Grant, or indeed than any of the dozen candidates for whose creation and preservation the Tribune is more than half responsible, is too clear to need proof. But it is not wholly this reason which has given such unexpected impetus to the movement started by the Texas journey, the derision of the carpetbaggers, the tribute to General Lee, and the Livermore letter. It is the absurd personal liking for the man Greeley which prevails throughout the country "___ in all homes

Where his sweet story comes"

whose daily walk and conversation have been observed and understood by those nearer home. But the Republican masses would vote for Greeley as they think him, not for Greeley as in truth he is; and the means do not exist for exploding this apparition and revealing the man. The Tribune might do it, as it has exploded the phenomenon of Conkling; but then the Tribune won't, and so the fictitions and misunderstood Greeley will remain the real and popular candidate. And it is the fact with which politicians must deal, who understand their epoch and expect to accomplish results.

Such politicians control the Chicago Tribune, one of the most influential journals of the Northwest. It is a free trade journal, though Republican, and has had more personal quarrels and political differences with Mr. Greeley's Tribune than any other paper in the country. But it comprehends the importance of the Greeley movement.

In one point we should differ with the Tribune. Mr. Greeley (as journalists we regret to make the admission) wants office. He has always wanted it, from the time he broke with Seward and Weed till the time he ran for Comptroller and for Congress. But this slienates none of his strength, for the reason that the Republican masses see how the politicians have always cheated him of a nomination whenever his party had a chance of success, and put him forward when nobody else could be got to run a hopeless race. And if the voters of his party get it into their heads that faithful service to his party had better for once be completely rewarded with the best office in the people's gift, they will take small account of his weakness in desiring a distinction that can add nothing to his power, and will take great account of the fact that the men most opposed to his candidacy are the politicians whom he has lashed for their incompetency or their corruptions.

For our own parts we should rejoice at such a square anti-protection issue as his candidacy would give us, and to use one of his own comparisons, will put into an enion all our tears at seeing him again remanded to the tools he can handle.

THE FUTURE OF CAPITAL. From the N. Y. Nation. The London Spectator said, the other day, what we must all acknowledge, melancholy as it is, to be true, that, if the performances of the Commune do nothing else, they will do a great deal to secure a more persistent and earnest attention from the public at large for the reconciliation of labor and capital. The rising of June, 1848, caused Louis Napoleon to provide a substitute for the national workshops, by reconstructing a large portion of Paris at the public expense. The Fenian risings produced the state of mind in England which at last made it possible to disestablish the Irish Church and to amend the Irish land-laws. It is very likely now that the bloody work in Paris will do much towards convincing people-not that the theories of the Commune can or ought ever to be embodied in legislation—but that the fact that large bodies of men hold such theories is a serious fact which it will not do to slight or ignore, and with which intelligent and philanthropic men must make some attempt to deal. There is nothing of which the world is at this moment tween classes; no great advance in civilization beyond the point we have already reached is possible till this is brought about in some way. Two systems of industry have been tried thus far, the protective and the competitive, and neither of them has settled or shows any sign of settling the relations between labor and capital on a satisfactory basis. Under both, the capitalist is growing very rich and powerful; under neither is the condition of the workingman ceasing to be precarious and uncomfortable, and under neither does the contrast between his condition and that of the employer become less striking and exasperating. If we take any of the great branches of industry which the steam engine has called into existence-coal, iron, cotton, and wool-we find that, taking the civilized world as a whole, while a very large number of great fortunes have been made in them by the capitalist class, and while the habits of that class have grown very luxurious, and nearly all the good things of life, including political power, have largely fallen or are falling to it, the condition of the working people engaged in them has not materially changed. or, at all events, has not improved in anything like the same degree. Their houses are perhaps a little better, their clothes a little cheaper, and their savings a little larger than they used to be, but the workingman's share of the pleasures and graces and refinements of life, and, above all, the distance which separates him and his family from want, has not much increased within fifty years under either the regime of free trade or protection. In this country the contrast between the laborer's condition and that of the capitalist is not so striking, or to the workingman so offensive, as in Europe, because, partly owing to the state of society here, and partly to the natural resources of the country, the passage from the one class to the other is easy and constantly made; but the tendencies which people are deploring in Europe are at work here, though less actively. We have our trades unions, labor reformers, and so on, just as they have in Europe, but we have also fertile waste lands which they have not in Europe; and this takes the fizz and sparkle out of the preachings of our demagogues and blatherskites for the present; but the waste lands will not last always or last long, and we are almost as much concerned as any

people in having the labor question settled out of hand. We do not believe, as our readers know, that anything is likely to be done towards this desirable consummation by legislation; we believe liberty to be the only sound and safe and permanent basis for industry, the liberty to buy and sell, and make and mend, where, when, and how we please. We believe, too, that any attempt to provide by law any other measure of a man's deserts in the social state than the amount of his own labor, or the value put on the product of his labor by his fellows in free and open market, would in the long run be destructive to civilization, or at least to our civilization. A society in which the majority decided what I was to do, and how much I was to get for it, and in what manner I should expend my earnings, might exist, and enjoy a certain kind of prosperity, we freely admit. But it would not be a ealthy society, or a society through which humanity at large would advance. It would not be a society in which human character would gainin strength, or foresight, or persistence, or in which human intellect would gain in power or flexibility, or in which the stores of human experience would be enriched. It would be a dull, dead, monotonous, bald, and barren society, fat and well clothed, no doubt, but with few aims or aspirations above those of a settlement of beavers or prairie-dogs. We hold, therefore, that any men, or body of men, who seek to substitute such a state of

society for the one in which we now live, are to be opposed by all moral and mental agencies at our command, as long as they confine themselves to agitation and argument; and whenever they attempt it by force, as they do in France, we hold that if war be ever lawful for any object whatever, it is lawful to wage war upon them, and destroy them to any extent that may be necessary to secure peace. Of all the pernicious and immoral talk of the day, none is, to our mind, more pernicious, absurd, or im-moral than that which claims a peculiar sanctity or reverence for the folly or violence of workingmen, or poor men, as such, and which excuses and defends, in a workingman or a poor man, crimes and absurdities which would damn any other men to infamy, and convert any other men into public enemies. Doubtless, at the bar of Supreme Justice a murdering ruffian like Rigault, the Public Prosecutor of the Commune, who spent his last night on earth arranging for the slaughter of innocent "hostages," have all proper allowances made for his trials and temptations and congenital imperfections; but it behooves the sober, sensible, industrious members of the human race, to whose care civilization is committed, to remember above all things, in dealing with such people, that it is not their duty to measure out to Rigault and the like of him abstract justice, as they are not competent for any such task, but to see that he and his fellows do not imperil those great foundations on which human society rests-men's certainty that they will enjoy the fruits of their labor, their confidence in the permanence of the leading social conditions around them, and in the gradualness and peaceableness of all changes. To introduce complete uncertainty about the future into civilized life is to take from it the feature which more than all else distinguishes it from savage life, and to kill useful human activity at its very roots,

The elevation of the working classes will come from co-operation. It is only in this way, that is, through the combination of labor and capital in the same hands, that whatever is now offensive in the difference in the life of the laborer and capitalist will disappear; and co-operation will only become possible through the workingman's growth in intelligence and self-restraint. It is through co-operation, and not through hate and levelling laws, that workingmen will finally come to dress like capitalists, go home to comfortable and well-ordered homes, and refined and rational amusements, as capitalists do, and get a share of the enjoyments other classes get from leisure, books, and travel. Nobody now takes anything from the workingman except what he surrenders through want of thrift, foresight, self-restraint, and mutual confidence. But there is no doubt that there is a long interval of time to be bridged over before co-eperation becomes so general as either seriously to affect the condition of the laboring population in any country, or to reconcile them to the contrast between their life and that of the capitalist class. We have undoubtedly many years of envy, hatred, malice, and heart-burnings before us, and, during that period of transition, undoubtedly the larger portion of the responsibility for it all will necessarily fall on the capitalist. His resources are greater, his training is better, and his crosses are fewer and easier to bear. There is, it must be admitted, something grotesque in the comparison sometimes made in the labor his "anvieties" and those of the laborer. It must be remembered, too, that it is quite that he cannot secure himself and quiet by preaching the laws of political economy. This has been thoroughly tried both in France and England, and has failed. In both these countries, the workingclasses have constructed a political economy of their own, in which Adam Smith counts for very little, and at the bottom of their system, though less apparent in some places than others, is the theory that capitalists are drones living on the proceeds of other men's labor, who ought to be either banished from the body politic altogether or else despoiled of a large portion of their yearly gains. In England, the latter doctrine is gaining mest ground, under the influence of the hostility excited by the large idle and now almost useless class of landed proprietors. In France, particularly in Paris— owing largely, we believe, to the ex-tent to which that city is the resort of men of wealth who give themselves up wholly to sensual indulgence, under the eyes of a large body of excitable workingmen, who are also extraordinarily eager for sensual enjoyment themselves-the utter extirpation of the capitalist class, and the prevention of the accumulation of wealth in the hands of individuals, is sought with almost satanic energy. The Positivists, who have come to the support of the Commune, have provided an honored place for the capitalists in their system, namely, the directorship of industry, the superintendence or inspiration of the Board of Sages, who are to form the spiritual power in the Comtist society, and who are to impel them to selfabnegation, public spirit, and good works. This is unquestionably the nearest approach that has been made to a solution of the question in what way the working-class hostility to capital can be assuaged, until such time as the working-classes become themselves owners of capital. The rich men of all countries will have to be coerced by public opinion into a deeper sense of the responsibility which wealth imposes on them than the mass of them as yet show. Extravagant and ostentatious living must be discounte-nanced by the great body of the community more than it is now. Giving, and giving freely, to charities, to institutions of learning, to all sorts of enterprises which have the moral and physical culture of the mass of the people for their ob-ject, must be insisted on more earnestly as a duty, and an imperative duty, and not treated, as it is now, as a work of supererogation,

which an honorable man may let alone if he

pleases. In short, the facts of society-tne

temper and condition of the working classes,

the share which they have in creating wealth,

and which, though not recognizable legally

in the distribution of wealth, the capitalist to

whom the wealth comes is morally bound to

remember - must be taken into account

by rich men in regulating their lives. Mr.

Peter Cooper, who may be pointed out as almost an example of what the capita-

talist ought to be in a better social state

to which we trust we are yet com-

ing, made the other night in his ad-

dress at the Cooper Institute a touching and admirable statement of the principles

which ought to govern the relations of the

two great divisions of industrial society— and they may be formulated by saying to

every rich man, after he has pocketed his

half-yearly dividends, "You have now got

your rights as an owner of capital; but the

minute you leave this office your duties as a

social being begin, and you are no more en-titled in the forum of morals to neglect them

than to full to pay your pecuniary debts; and

they are the more imperative because the best interests forbid their being enforced by law."

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