

THE CONGRESS OF THE UNITED STATES AND THE EX-FENIAN CONVICTS.

(London Times, 2nd February.)

The Atlantic Cable conveys an announcement which will be received in this country with a good deal of surprise. On the motion of General Butler it has been resolved in the House of Representatives at Washington by a majority of 172 to 21, that "the Congress of the United States in the name and on behalf of the people thereof, do give O'Donovan Rossa and the Irish exiles and patriots a cordial welcome to the capital and country." This is quite an unexpected incident in the progress of the Fenian comedy, and we must congratulate our liberated convicts on the singular success of their efforts to make themselves famous. When they were "banished" to America it was of course well understood that they would be cordially welcomed by the congenial mob of New York. We have already heard that "an extensive reception" was designed for them in that Irish metropolis. The Democratic politicians joined the Irish Societies in making preparations, and the Board of Aldermen passed complimentary resolution and appointed a Reception Committee. A large sum of money was being collected and was to be employed not only in display but in "the substantial relief and comfort of the objects of the demonstration." All this is natural and might have been counted on, and the prospect must have materially soothed the pangs of enforced exile. But it must have required a stronger sense of self importance than even O'DONOVAN ROSSA can possess to anticipate that he would be made the object of an almost unanimous welcome by an Assembly which represents the whole of the United States. He and his friends ought certainly to owe no grudge to English law, still less to Mr. Gladstone, who has perhaps selected for their liberation the moment most favourable to their public prospects in America. It is not every man who can live to receive a vote of welcome from the representatives of a great country. Fenianism has ceased to be profitable in Ireland, but it has become a fortunate speculation for American adventurers.

The first reply the country will be inclined to make to this remarkable Resolution is that the capital and country of the United States are very welcome to O'Donovan Rossa and the Irish exiles and patriots. But such a proceeding is certainly unprecedented in the Annals of International Comity. What are the performances that have recommended the Fenians to the honourable notice of American Representatives? So far as they are able they have raised and abetted a civil war in this country. Their declared object was not merely to throw off the authority of the Queen, but to dismember the United Kingdom. For what purpose they have not merely spoken and written; they have collected arms, and they have been the occasion of actual bloodshed. No foreign Power could have declared designs more hostile to this Kingdom than these men. For these offences they have most justly been condemned to the punishment of convicts, and they are for the present banished from the shores of England as public enemies of the United Kingdom. Such are the persons to whom, by its present vote, the House of Representatives has thought fit to do honour. In other words, an Assembly which claims to speak in the name of the United States publicly expresses its sympathy with attempts to dismember a friend-

ly country, and with open and violent rebellion against the Government. We know perfectly well that hardly a single man in the House of Representatives, not even General Butler, really intended such an outrageous expression of feeling. But public acts are liable to be judged according to their apparent meaning, and this is the only possible interpretation, on public grounds, of General Butler's Resolution. If it were serious it could only be treated as an act of avowed hostility. Since no one on either side of the water can treat it as serious, it becomes simply a piece of extremely bad manners; and it must be added that discredit is thrown on Congress when one of the House consents to play in an unmanly farce.

But there is one obvious application of this performance which ought to have rendered it impossible. We have for years been listening to the bitterest complaints of the sympathy shown in this country to the cause of the Southern States. We have been almost threatened with war for our alleged friendliness to the large population and the eminent public men who have withdrawn themselves from the Union. Distinguished American Senators have publicly demanded reparation from our lack of "benevolence" to the cause of the North. All the while not one single public body in this country expressed any opinion on the merits of the struggle. A few hasty utterances by two or three public men form the only approach to an unfriendly expression by any responsible authorities. So much is this the case that American authors have been driven to make a flagrant offence out of our negative and neutral attitude. Now let the Americans consider that if we had followed the conduct of which they have now given us an example the House of Commons must have voted an address of cordial "welcome" to Messrs. Mason and Slidell, or must have accorded a similar honour to Mr. Jefferson Davis, and General Beauregard, when they visited this country after the close of the rebellion. It is easy to imagine the storm of indignation which such a vote would have aroused in the United States. Yet it would in no substantial respect have differed from the present Resolution of the House of Representatives, except that its objects would not, like the Fenian convicts, have been personally insignificant and unworthy of public honour. General Butler has lately made it a matter of grievous complaint against us that the officers of the Alabama and Shenandoah "were feted in British ports." In point of fact they were treated as "lions" by a few private persons. But what a case would not General Butler have made out against us if the House of Commons had passed a vote of sympathy with the Confederate captains? It is evident that American politicians have a deep seated dislike to anything in the nature of Reciprocity, whether it be in the form of a treaty or of mutual consideration. We are always hurting American susceptibilities. We are expected to be as tender of every Transatlantic prejudice as if the people of the United States possessed nothing but nerves in their composition. But American politicians seem to think we have no susceptibilities whatever. This last proceeding is indeed unusually strong; but we shall be quite reconciled to it if the Americans will only apply their own example as a contrast to the conduct of which they have been wont to accuse us. If their own House of Representatives may with impunity pass a vote of sympathy with an Irish rebellion what possible complaint can they make of our attitude towards the Confederates?

The reader however, will easily divine the real significance of this undignified proceeding. General Butler has recently avowed the necessity of doing something to maintain the Republican party in power, and there is scarcely anything he would not be prepared to do for that grand object. This "something" would be done if the Irish vote could be secured for the Republican party. As a rule that vote has been steadily given to the Democrats and, as our Correspondent lately stated it was "the Democratic politicians generally" who were preparing an "extensive reception" for the Fenian convicts in New York. What could be more likely to gratify the "1,600,000 naturalized Irishmen" who are ready to take Canada by contract in 60 days than to welcome their champions with the public authority of the United States? The proposal once made, it is easy to understand that politicians of both parties found great difficulty in refusing to support it. To have done so would have been to risk these invaluable votes. Such is the discreditable game to which a few unscrupulous politicians are doing their best to reduce representative Government in America. It is as easy as any other downward course. A reckless proposal has only to be made in order to expose all men, however moderate, to a strong temptation, and almost to coerce them into yielding. The founders of American institutions foresaw that a high standard of public intelligence and morality would be necessary for the stability of their edifice but they probably imagined that such a standard would be first corrupted, not by the populace, but by those leaders of opinion whose duty it would be to maintain it.

THE PROPOSED CHANNEL TUNNEL.—An interesting trial has just taken place of one of Burton's tunnelling machines. A model was exhibited at the last conversazione at the Institute of Civil Engineers, and at the soiree of the British Association in Liverpool. The present trial was made in the grey chalk at Scotland, Kent, at the quarry belonging to Messrs. Lea and Son, of Holborough. This demonstration was made chiefly to show the ease and rapidity with which a tunnel may be driven into such a formation as that which lies under the Channel between England and France. The rate at which the machine advanced was 3 feet 9 inches per hour, in a tunnel seven feet in diameter, and it was obvious to those who witnessed the operation that the only real limit to the rate of progress would be the rapidity with which the waggons loaded by the machine's own action could be carried away. The ease with which the machine worked astonished the large party of practical and scientific men who were present.

BREAKFAST.—EPPS'S COCOA.—GRATEFUL AND COMFORTING.—The very agreeable character of this preparation has rendered it a general favorite. The CIVIL SERVICE GAZETTE remarks:—"The singular success which Mr. Epps attained by his homœopathic preparation of cocoa has never been surpassed by any experimentalist. By a thorough knowledge of the natural laws which govern the operations of digestion and nutrition, and by a careful application of the fine properties of well selected cocoa, Mr. Epps has provided our breakfast tables with a delicately flavoured beverage which may save us many heavy doctors' bills." Made simply with boiling water or milk. Sold by the Trade only in ½ lb., 1 lb., and 1 lb. tin-lined packets, labelled—JAMES EPPS & Co., Homœopathic Chemists, London, England.