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E KENT NEWS,

A WEEKLY NEWSPAPER

o Agriculture, Literature, Politics, an General News.

ARD MANSFIELD.

PROPRIETOR.

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POETRY.

Written for the Kent News.

SPRING.

y king of winter,
losing all his pow'rs;
no longer hinder
long and gloomy hours

easing spring is coming
orgeous fair array:
d man winter's running
all his speed away.

rnal sun is pouring
gleaming rays around,
ntle spring is storing
reasures on the ground,

land vale she's winging
wing buds and flow'rs:
ny birds are singing
lm secluded bow'rs.

s and shrubs she's clothing
ture's green attire,
ects now'll be roving
ns for us t'admire.

k his note is tuning,
wren is twitt'ring now;
d'ner too is pruning
es with sweating brow.

son is th'most charming
sn of the year;
o it is for farming
me for greatest cheer.

gh to soothe those feeling
veliness she bears;
ntle breezes stealing
ening all our cares.

it is for sporting,
Leap Year comes around;
s go a courting,
th them beaux are found.

SIGMA TAU EPSILON.

ACKOPATHY.

andeth's pills,
-five cent box;
nsend's Sarsaparilla,
o kill an ox.

go to bed,
art of Salmagundi,
of this,
ose of *"alicomfundi."*

t and morning,
pint of Brandy,—
if you please,
tick of Cough-cure candy.

the above.
Quacknip tea,—
are not dead,
ought to be.

EOPATHY.

air—
u take the better,
's laws
letter.

go
f Biscay—
Gin,
and the Whisky.

irits cheerful,
sickness
r-fearful.

food,
cold water,
well,
ought ter.

g applied to for the
nce from school, the
his answer:
aterin!"

POLITICAL.

REPORT

OF THE MAJORITY OF THE COMMITTEE ON

SECRET SOCIETIES.

MADE TO THE

HOUSE OF DELEGATES OF MARYLAND,

MARCH 3, 1856.

The majority of the select committee to whom was referred so much of the Governor's Message as related to secret societies beg leave to report:

That they have undertaken and performed the duty assigned them by the House, with the solicitude natural to the grave character of the alarm indicated by the Executive upon the discovery of evils lurking in the social constitution of the State, of such magnitude as those described in the message. These evils, the Governor has informed the Legislature, he has detected, in certain secret political associations, in the formation and encouragement of which he has found reason to apprehend the most disastrous dangers to the public peace, dangers which in his opinion, threaten civil war in its worst form—"a war of races and sects," through the agitation of "the most unconquerable passions and prejudices of the human heart"—tending to eventually poisoning "of the very foundation of public security," by which the Constitution will become "a solemn mockery and the republic a cheat and a delusion, whose very essence is despotism."

The Governor, though not fully informed of the extent to which these secret conspiracies have carried their machinations against the safety of the State, has been enabled to penetrate so far into their wicked purposes as to authorize him to affirm that they "tend to the subversion of the well established and most dearly cherished principles of our government, and to the establishment of rules for discriminating against large classes of citizens, not only unknown to the Federal Constitution and those of the several States, but plainly prohibited by the letter and spirit of all of them."

It is not very clear from this affirmation whether it is rules referred to, or the large classes of citizens that are unknown to the several constitutions and prohibited by the letter and spirit of each. If the reference be to the former, as the Committee suppose was the meaning of the author of the message, the Legislature is left to conjecture as to the object which the discriminations made by these rules are intended to accomplish. From subsequent passages in this State paper, we are led to infer that these discriminating rules may be regulations for the employment of "brute force to control the ballot-box," and "deter the quiet and peaceably disposed citizens from the exercise of the right of suffrage;" or they may consist in a series of provisions adapted "to allow a citizen to be proscribed on account of his religious faith," in both of which suppositions the Governor is, undoubtedly, not without the strongest reason for asserting that the discriminations would be clearly against the Constitution of each and of all of the States of this Union.

Whatever may be the import of the facts of which the Executive has obtained a partial revelation, they have made a very profound impression upon the fears of the Chief Magistrate, enough has been divulged to him to authorize him to say that it furnished evidence of "a formidable effort to segregate and divide" the whole people into clans or classes "by a proposed exclusion from the rights of citizenship on account of place of birth or religious opinions," and to compel him to warn the State against "a war of races and sects," which he regards as a calamity to be averted by a timely interference of the Legislature.

The intensity of the Governor's alarm at the existence of these secret societies, may be measured by the earnestness with which he declares that they "have *already* been productive of more baneful consequences *than any thing which has occurred since the organization of our government.*" He makes this assertion upon full deliberation and conviction of the portentous mischiefs brought to view in the next topic of his message, touching a most disastrous popular agitation now rife in all its virulence over the land, which he justly describes as having once "brought us to the very verge of disunion," and which he believes, even now, induces "great reason to fear that our blessed Union will prove to be but a rope of sand and the Constitution which is the sacred bond of that Union, instead of being a protecting shield, and a blessing to the people of the South (be converted into) an instrument of "undisguised tyrany;" from which very strong declarations it is apparent that the secret associations that have come to the knowledge of the Executive, are even more formidable in the apprehension of the Executive than the ominous aspects of the slavery question, with all its threatened and actual assaults upon the integrity of our national confederacy.

The House upon receiving the communication of these startling and important disclosures from the chief magistrate of the State, hastened to give them the attention due, as well to the high source from which they were made as to the intrinsic gravity of the peril they seemed to menace, and, ot once, organized the select committee to investigate the facts, and to report such measures as in their judgment the emergency of the case might demand.

For the purpose of this investigation the committee was invested with extraordinary powers, appropriate to the nature of the inquiry submitted to them, and the danger of the crisis which the Executive had called upon the Legislature to avert. Besides conferring upon the committee the authority to send for persons and papers, the House also directed them to invite the aid of the Executive, and to request of the Governor such further information as his vigilance over the public safety, and his means of detecting the progress of these conspirators, might enable him to add to the important discoveries he had already made.

The committee promptly responding to the anxiety natural to the House, and to the people of the State, upon the reception of intelligence so unexpected and so full of cause for serious apprehension, lost no time in availing themselves of the privilege they were invited to use, by an application to the Governor for a more explicit disclosure of the character and proceedings of the secret societies to which his message alluded; they accordingly addressed a letter to him, through their chairman, respectfully soliciting his assistance to their proposed investigation, by imparting whatsoever he might be able to communicate as necessary for their guidance in the preliminaries of their inquiry. The committee were gratified to receive an immediate reply from the Governor, in which he exprssed his satisfaction, "that the popular branch of the Legislature has seen fit thus promptly to respond to this portion of his message," adding that "the subject is one of great magnitude in every point of view, affecting most deeply the honor of the State, as well as the peace and good order of society, and unquestionably demands at your hands, the most rigid and thorough examination."

This letter, which the committee presume from seeing it published, without their consent or agency, immediately after its date in several of the newspapers of the State, is intended by the Governor as a supplement to his message, proper to be communicated to the people, contains some important explanations of the scope and design of its author in the revelations of the message touching the alarm he had expressed for the safety of the State, and very happily relieves the committee, as it has no doubt relieved the House, of much of the anxiety which suggested the investigation. It has in equal degree lightened the labor of the task with which the committee is charged.

It now appears that the Governor was misunderstood in the intimations he had given regarding his discovery of secret associations, that the House had been unnecessarily alarmed by supposing that these associations were hatching dangerous plots, of which only some obscure manifestations had escaped from concealment and found their way to the notice of the Executive: and that the single cause of the Governor's apprehensions has been traced by him to the proceedings of a large political party, transacted in a National council held in the city of Philadelphia in the month of June last. It also appears that the secrets which have contributed to the Executive's disquiet are the political doctrines avowed in a paper called the Plafform of that Party, which has been published in a thousand newspapers and innumerable hand-bills pamphlets and books, and is still undergoing daily republication with a view to the widest possible announcement throughout the United States.

The Governor does not intimate that he has discovered or believes that the party to which he refers, has adopted, or acknowledges, or acts upon any other principles or doctrines than those set forth in the platform. Indeed, so far from intimating this, in reiterating in his letter the alarm given in the message of the dangerous character of this conspiracy, he appeals for his evidence to the open avowal of the objects of the party referred to, now known as the American Party, as they are written and published in the proceedings above described.

It is true that he does take exception to this party because it chooses to pursue its declared objects, by private consultations whenever it finds those necessary, and does not allow these consultations to be intruded upon by enemies, spies, reporters, or others who might find inducements to plot or practice against its success in the strenuous endeavor it has been making to reform abuses against the letter and spirit of our Constitution, and in its efforts to infuse into the the heart of the country a sound and genuine American feeling.

In this unexpected communication of the scope and character of the supposed evils which have aroused the vigilance and invoked the warning voice of the Governor, the committee find but little occasion for a protracted investigation, none for the use of that power to send for persons and papers which the House has conferred upon them, to be employed if they thought necessary. The House itself is possessed of the most authentic information upon the whole subject, and can appeal, besides, to a large majority of the people of the State, as the host of witnesses, to satisfy the Governor that the public safety is fortified by the protection of virtuous, enlightened and patriotic defenders and that the Constitution, both of the Federal Government and of the State are secure against any violence by foreign and domestic enemies. Whatever ground the Governor may fancy he has had for sounding an alarm, it is but a topic for discussion upon facts not concealed, but openly proclaimed. He has himself referred to the proofs, and these are all abroad in the light of day. There is no necessity for producing witnesses to establish them. They consist in carefully considered and solemnly uttered declarations upon the public political interests of the country, promulgated by men of unquestionable fidelity to every obligation of free government; men of intelligence, reputation and distinguished public service, and published through every channel in which the American people are accustomed to seek for knowledge upon the subjects of their rights and duties, they are announced in clear and unambiguous phrases, meaning precisely what they say, incapable of being construed in one sense in the North, and another sense in the South; they flatter no party's prejudices, nor compromise with any party's power, but simply and truly speak the deep convictions of the Native Republican sentiment, in which our free institutions had their birth, and by which alone they are to be preserved. These principles have been discussed and determined upon in a thousand open meetings of the people of Maryland. Their advocates have been confronted with opponents in free latitude of debate, and judgment has been pronounced by overwhelming majorities, which are now visibly represented in the Legislature.

When, therefore, the Governor has uttered his complaint to this General Assembly, he not only arraigns the loyalty of the people's representatives, but he arraigns the people themselves, and charges upon them a moral treason, in harboring thoughts and purposes hostile to their own freedom, and his opinion of blacker guilt than the deadly designs of abolitionism.

The authority of the Governor to communicate with the Legislature by an official message, is derived from the 18th section of the 2d Article of the Constitution which makes it his duty to "from time to time to inform the Legislature of the condition of the State, and recommend to their consideration such measures as he may judge necessary and expedient."—The Committee, in view of this constitutional duty, are compelled to infer that the Governor's purpose in bringing the subject of their present inquiry to the notice of the Legislature, was to invoke their deliberations to the necessity of adopting some measure for the suppression of the Societies to which he refers. It is, besides, but respectful to the high station which he occupies, to suppose that he was not actuated by an idle desire to indulge in mere partisan declamation against political opponents, nor to use the privilege of his office to excite the popular odium against those with whom it is his misfortune to differ in reference to great questions touching the administrations of the public affairs.

Giving the Governor, therefore, credit for a sincere and earnest purpose to call for the intervention of the Legislature through i s power to investigate these alleged abuses, and correct them, by proper and efficient laws, the Committee are forced to conclude that the message is intended as a recommendation of measures adapted to that end. Upon this supposition we presume that the Executive expects the Legislature to enact some law to forbid the citizens of Maryland, who have expressed their concurrence with the principles set forth in the proceedings of the National Council in Philadelphia, from assembling in their own places of meeting with closed doors, and from organizing their associations in accordance with any system of regulations that might create alarm on the part of those who may apprehend the casualty of falling into a minority before the force of public opinion embodied in support of the political views announced in the principles referred to. Indeed the Governor goes beyond the point of exception. He not only objects to the private consultation, but assails the principles themselves, as proper subjects to be suppressed by legislation. He more than once calls the attention of the Legislature to these principles, with a view to denounce them as unlawful, and false to the constitutional obligations of the citizens of the State. So grave a denunciation made by the Chief Magistrate in an official message, against a large body of the citizens of Maryland, and addressed to a Legislature which is composed, in greater part, of those against whom his censure is directed, presents an extraordinary case to the consideration of the Committee.

In looking for the specifications upon which the charge is grounded, the Committee find from the message and letter of the Governor that his alarm is chiefly produced by two articles incorporated in the declaration of the National Council in Philadelphia, which he has characterized as announcing "principles not only unknown to the Federal Constitution and those of the several States, but plainly prohibited by the letter and spirit of each and all of them."

The readers of the message and the supplement letter will recognize the following extracts from the declaration of the National Council to which the Governor has referred us, the articles which have supplied so much to excite his fears.

The National Council in defining the distinctive grounds of their party organization, took occasion, amongst many other points of public administration, to say, in Article, 6, that it would insist upon "The essential modification of the naturalization laws, the repeal by the Legislature of the respective States of all State laws, allowing foreigners not naturalized to vote, the repeal without retro-active operation, of all acts of Congress making grants of land to unnaturalized foreigners and and allowing them to vote in the territories." And in the 8th Article it declared a purpose of "Resistance to the aggressive policy and corrupting tendencies of the Roman Catholic church in our country, by the advancement to all political stations, Executive, Legislative, Judicial or Diplomatic, of those only who do not hold civil allegiance, directly or indirectly, to any foreign power, whether civil or ecclesiastical, and who are Americans by birth, education and training."

These Resolutions touching the views of the Party, promulgated in a National Convention of American citizens, and published to the world, have fallen under the animadversion of the Governor, and furnished the topic upon which he has thought it his duty to ask the remedial action of the Legislature.

The Committee cannot be mistaken in saying that the remedial action thus invoked can be no other than the application of the power of the Legislature to suppress the avowal and circulation of such doctrines in this State. His message and letter alludes distinctly to such a purpose. He says in the latter of these documents which only professes to explain what was ambiguous in the former—"I am credibly informed that there exists now within this State numerous societies of a secret character, whose object and purpose is to prevent the election or appointment to office of any person belonging to the Roman Catholic church, or who is not a native born citizen of the United States." "The existence of such unlawful combinations has been repeatedly charged in the Congress of the U. States." "With you gentlemen abides, under the sanction of the House of Delegates, the power of ascertaining the truth or falsity of these allegations—I am powerless in the premises beyond the making known to you what I fear and believe in regard to them."

It is clearly the Governor's opinion, as expressed in these extracts, that a combination of citizens of this State to proclaim and support a determination to vote for or appoint to office no person belonging to the Roman Catholic church, nor any one who is not a native born citizen, is an unlawful combination; and as he refers in his letter, by way of exposition of his meaning, to the 8th Article, we have quoted above, he is to be understood as speaking of persons belonging to the Roman Catholic church who acknowledge a 'civil' allegiance to a foreign power, since that is the qualification which the Governor was aware the party he alludes to, attached to its refusal to vote in the case of Roman Catholics.

Such unlawful combinations the Governor professes himself powerless to suppress, but implicitly commends that endeavor to the Legislature, which he infers has the power.

His warring against "a war of races and sects," has no point but in its reference to the danger of limiting the privileges of foreigners, and withholding political trusts from those of the Catholic faith, who acknowledge a foreign civil allegiance.

These, therefore, are the questions which the Governor's message was intended to bring to the consideration of the Legislature, as the unconstitutional meditation of unlawful societies, the proper subject for Legislative suppression. The Committee must presume that they again misunderstand the Governor, when they suppose him really to believe that there is any thing of an unlawful character in the freest discussion, whether secret or public, of the policy of the naturalization laws, or that these laws may not without violation of any principle of the Constitution, be modified or absolutely repealed at the pleasure of the Congress of the United States, or that any State in the Union may not restrict the privilege of voting and holding office to native born citizens, whenever such State shall find it useful to the common weal to do so. We are unwilling to believe that the Governor intended to assert a doctrine so extravagant as this, and rather interpret his language as meaning to rebuke those who have resolved in the absence of any change or repeal of the naturalization laws, to vote for none but native American citizens for places of trust in the government, and yet it would seem to be scarcely less extravagant to suppose that he regarded such a resolution, made by any citizen or number of citizens, as inconsistent with the letter or spirit of the constitution of the United States, or of that of any State or of any law of either. It is a dangerous assault upon the privilege of the ballot, which we have been accustomed to venerate as one of the safeguards of constitutional liberty when the Executive, or any other power in the State, ventures to condemn the motive of the citizen in the exercise of it.

The privacy of the ballot is guarded by law expressly that each voter may determine his choice, upon whatever consideration of private judgment he may choose to cast a vote, and that no man may question the grounds of such vote, or make it the subject of odious or offensive comment before the public. The privilege and the security of this exemption from all challenge, is too obvious to be discussed amongst a people born to the inheritance of free government. Every citizen has a right, which our institutions renognize as secured by a peculiar pledge of protection, to perfect freedom of judgment upon the political or religious opinions, upon the morals of the creed, no less than upon the character and capacity of any one who is submitted to the arbitrament of his vote or of his selection as a candidate for a place of trust in the administration of our governments, State or Federal, and he may determine that vote or selection by the weight which his own personal convictions may attach to any of these considerations. The spirit of republican freedom, no less than the positive law, secures him an inviolable immunity from all question of his motive. The attempt to arraign any citizen, or any number of citizens, for public judgment, and condemnation for these motives, is an invasion of personal right, scarcely less flagrant than the political proscriptions which history exhibits to us as the invariable signs and portents of the decay of free States.

The recommendation of Legislative interposition to suppress this free exercise of private judgment is so conspicuously in conflict with the sentiment that has been nursed in the heart of our American communities from their infancy to the present day, and so repulsive to the elemental precepts of our republican system, that the committee are most reluctant to believe that the Executive could seriously entertain the purposes which the message infers, or the most remote expectation that it could be responded to by a patriotic and intelligent Legislature in any other language than that of prompt and indignant dissent. It would have been more satisfactory to the committee if the Governor, when writing the letter to explain his message, had indicated what part of the Federal Constitution, or of the Constitution of Maryland forbids a citizen of this State from the indulgence in his widest investigation of the evils resulting to the country from the yearly infusion into the masses of our population of half a million of foreigners, what interdict of law, custom, or civic obligation there is to prevent the people of the United States in view of such an overshadowing mischief as result from the indiscriminate bestowal of citizenship upon those strangers, from adopting such guards and restraints for the protection of their own nationality, as they may think the case requires. The very fact that the foreign emigration has already become a visible and significant power in this State that it out-numbers the native population in some districts of the country, that it is powerful enough to dictate the policy of States in our limit, that it is intrinsically hostile in large numbers of its own masses to the institutions of a whole section of this confederacy, and that it has become essential to the numerical majority, and consequently political power of a party, which would loose its control if deprived of these reinforcements; such fact as these have awakened the attention of every thoughtful citizen to the gravest reflections touching the future, we are preparing for our posterity, and now fill all minds with anxious care to arrest and disarm the evil in the present day, with what sentiment of surprise would that action of our countrymen learn that in treating this subject as enlightened statesmen seeking to check a dangerous abuse.—They were perpetrating moral treason, trampling under foot the constitution of nation; "segregating and dividing the people into clans and classes," and kindling the fires of a civil war, "a war of races and sects," which is declared to be the 'deadliest curse' that can afflict a nation. No matter into what clans and classes these strangers may enrol themselves; what secret societies they may establish; what purposes they may harbor for the reform of our Government, or for entangling us in a war abroad at the expense of treaties and national faith, what catechisms they may address to candidates for office, and what private combinations they may form to chastise such as do not answer to their liking—all these things may pass unrebuked, or even with the complacent flattery of party acquiescence, as being altogether compatible with the dearly cherished principles of our government. With what surprise, in the presence of all these incidents of our day, will the grave American Statesman hear of the "unlawful combinations" in which he has been assembled to council with his native-born fellow citizens, to save from extinction and adulteration those glorious memories which cluster around the tombs of his ancestors, and that lofty privilege of American citizenship which had come to him, along with these memories, as his inheritance—

[CONCLUDED ON SECOND PAGE.]